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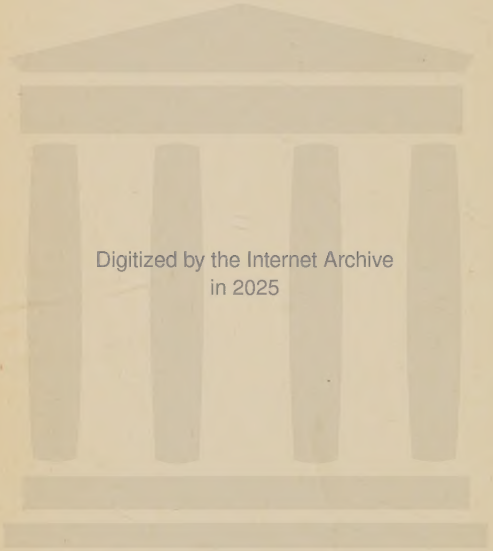
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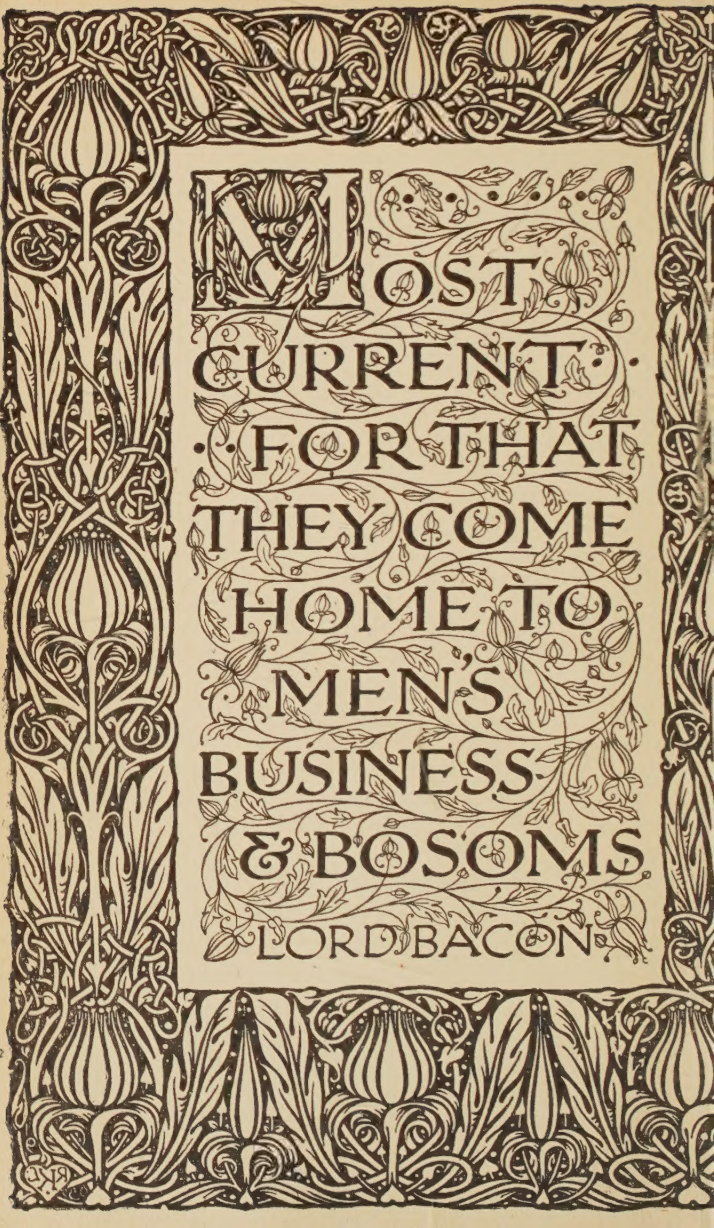
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CURRENT
FOR THAT
THEY COME
HOME TO
MEN'S
BUSINESS
& BOSOMS
LORD BACON

ON THE STUDY of CELTIC LITERATURE and other Essays by MATTHEW ARNOLD

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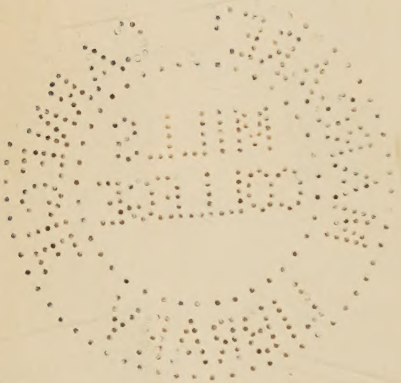

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INTRODUCTION

THIS prose book of Arnold's, while it recalls in many ways his *Essays in Criticism*, breaks entirely new ground in its brilliantly tentative Celtic pages. In the wilder regions of Angus and Taliesin he is less sure of himself than he was in the accustomed paths where he had a trained memory and formed opinions to rely upon. At times he appears confused by the thickets of Welsh and Irish philology, and then his adventure is apt to suggest nothing so much as Oxford in person trying to break into the wilderness. In spite, however, of some false steps and mistakes by the way, his account, after forty years and more of research by later explorers, is still a highly stimulating one to read. He had for safeguard, fortunately, the instinct that the poet who is a critic and the critic who is a poet can bring to such a survey. He had, too, thanks partly no doubt to the Cornish strain in him, a temperamental feeling for Celtic things. It is to be traced emerging again and again in his poetry, where "Tristram and Iseult" and "St. Brandan" stand out as brave witnesses; although indeed the poor synopsis of the tale prefixed to the longer poem does not incline one to think that he had travelled very far at that time in Celtic romance. But "Tristram" and some lesser pieces like the Seiriol sonnet show how nearly the spell had touched him:

> "She told them of the fairy-haunted land
> Away the other side of Brittany,
> Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
> Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
> Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine creeps,
> Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps."

If we turn to his life and letters we find it was late before he was tempted or provoked into making any real or critical bid at the literature: provoked, it can

truly be said, because it was the noise of the Philistines, his darling enemy, crying down the Celtic host that led him to intervene. We can hardly understand to-day the forces against which he had to fight in maintaining his Apology for Celtic literature. It is clear that Oxford herself did not much help him in it. It was once supposed that his father, Dr. Arnold, had at least done something to give his sympathies that bias. But when it was put to him, in a letter from home, he replied asking if his father had ever written " a single line testifying to a sense of any virtues and graces in the Celt? "

The wonder is then that Arnold was able so far to disengage himself as he did, and attempt this new excursion in mid-career. At that period he was not only a busy man of letters with a double function to maintain; he was a still busier man of affairs. He had to keep up his Oxford Chair of Poetry, from which these Celtic lectures were delivered. He was the ex-officio critic, what Ben Jonson would call the censurer, of his fellow-countrymen—a position well figured in the later essays of this volume. He was and had been for many years an inspector of education, whose services appear in the set of reports gathered up in books like *The Popular Education of France* and *A French Eton*. This avocation led to much travelling both at home and abroad, and much writing for the blue-books, which cost him downright hard labour, since he was impelled to put his whole mind into them. All these things served to involve him further in the religious and sociological distractions of the day, and to keep him urging his light guerilla warfare with his contemporaries—an exacting form of activity to one of his highly-strung, self-conscious, fastidious habit. If he ended by making his Celtic epistles into a polemic too, it was only by so doing that he was able to find the energy for their accomplishment, or the due equation between them and his other interests. And one way to follow up his Celtic argument now, as he would wish, in relating it to his other work, is to realise too how the lines of the study have been widened since his death.

One of his students at Oxford — whose Chair of Celtic there sprang into being in direct response to the plea he made—Sir John Rhys, has adopted the very method he desired to see applied in attacking the subject from the Welsh and Irish side. It would have been interesting to have had Sir John's personal reminiscences of Arnold as Celtic lecturer; reminiscences which in a recent letter he confessed he would find it hard to recall. But there is a passage in his *Celtic Folklore* offering a glimpse of those Oxford days which may be quoted, especially as it helps to set in relief one of the most telling passages in Arnold's lectures:

"The whole cycle of the Mabinogion," he writes, "must have appeared strange to the storyteller and the poet of mediæval Wales, and far removed from the world in which they lived. We have possibly a trace of this feeling in the epithet *hên*, 'old, ancient,' given to Math in a poem in the *Red Book of Hergest*, where we meet with the line:

Gan uath hen gan gouannon.
(With Math the ancient, with Gofannon.)

. . . So strange, probably, and so obscure did some of the contents of the stories themselves seem to the storytellers that they may be now and then suspected of having effaced some of the features which it would have interested us to find preserved. This state of things brings back to my mind words of Matthew Arnold's to which I had the pleasure of listening more years ago than I would care to remember. He was lecturing at Oxford on Celtic literature, and observing 'how evidently the mediæval story-teller is pillaging an antiquity of which he does not fully possess the secret; he is like a peasant,' Matthew Arnold went on to say, 'building his hut on the site of Halicarnassus or Ephesus; he builds, but what he builds is full of materials of which he knows not the history, or knows by a glimmering tradition merely—stones "not of this building," but of an older architecture, greater, cunninger, more majestical. In the mediæval stories of no Latin or

Teutonic people does this strike one as in those of the Welsh.' This becomes intelligible only on the theory of the stories having been in Goidelic before they put on a Welsh dress."

The clue to the hidden world of Celtic romance is one that may be much more easily followed to-day. For a new apparatus has been gradually got together in the last thirty or forty years, and the student has a far greater wealth of material to work upon. Take the Mabinogion alone: the Welsh Arthurian tales so called still form, together with Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, the surest and delightfullest approach to that high country of romance.

Sir John Rhys's *Hibbert Lectures* (1888) and his *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* serve to declare the infinite wealth of folklore preserved in Malory and the Welsh book. With these should be ranked the divers contributions of Professor Kuno Meyer in this country, Professor Zimmer in Germany, and Professor Loth in France, whose writings, if often to the mere outsider of apparent contrary effect, have helped to clear the thicket at point after point. Then, for material, in the original or in translation, there is quite a new provenance to count on. There are the Oxford facsimile texts, edited by Sir John Rhys and Dr. Gwenogfryn Evans, of the *Red Book of Hergest* and the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, noble old Welsh mediæval Welsh anthologies. In Irish, we have had the inestimable life-work of the late Dr. Whitley Stokes, now nobly closed; and we have a whole shelf-full of Irish tales and romances to compare with the Welsh: the *Silva Gadelica* of Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady, the *Vision of MacConglinne* of Professor Kuno Meyer, the Cuchulain books of Lady Gregory and Miss Eleanor Hull, the various texts of the Irish Texts Society, the translated romance of *Deirdire* by Mr. W. B. Carmichael. In France, Professor Loth has translated, more literally than Lady Guest, the Mabinogion; and there is no need to mention the series of books edited by M. Arbois de Jubainville. To venture upon dictionaries and grammars would be

dangerously to stretch the cloth: but a word must be said for the Mediæval Welsh Grammar of the late Professor Strachan of Manchester, and for Professor Anwyl's work in the same science. Another book, an aid to mediæval Celtic by Professor J. Morris-Jones, who is both poet and philologist, upon which he has been engaged for some years, would probably have appeared also but for the grace due to a dead fellow-worker. These things count seriously in the study to which Arnold's essay is the light induction.

To return to romance, where lies the most inviting road of all open to English readers one might point to the Grail literature that has sprung up in the last twenty years. In this series the reader can now obtain the late Dr. Sebastian Evans's superb version of the Perceval le Gallois romance, *The High History of the Holy Graal.* This golden mediæval book should be read in sequence with the story of Peredur in the Mabinogion, and the Quest episodes in the later books of Sir Thomas Malory. Dr. Furnivall long ago edited (for the Roxburghe Club) the fifteenth-century English *Seynt Graal.* Succeeding Mr. Alfred Nutt's earlier volume, within the last year two or three notable fresh commentaries have appeared, including those by Miss Jessie Weston on the Sir Percival legend in the Grimm Library (vol. ii. 1906, vol. iii. 1909), and Mr. A. E. Waite, *The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail.*

Were the list carried further it would degenerate into a Celtic catalogue. Enough has been said to show the English reader that most of the difficulties insisted upon forty years ago need no longer deter him. The Celtic confines are no longer in the mist; they are with care and courage attainable. They open to the romance-lover a vista whose every nearer pitch offers a more alluring glimpse of the Isles of Youth, the Emain where wisdom is still young and the human mind is still like an inspired child's.

Arnold saw in the imaginative contact of the two literatures, English and Celtic, a further aid to the deliverance of his own people from their intellectual

bonds. His Celtic argument, uttered in 1867, was part of his propaganda, and it is inevitable that, like most special pleadings, a certain part of his pages should have lost force. Take the case of the Welsh Eisteddfod and the old criticism levelled against it. Now that it has survived a hundred attacks, and grown year by year stronger and more effective in poetry and in music, and in all its varied educative service to the community, the criticism of the newspaper men of half a century ago, which he countered, seems a very old tale, rather older, let us say, than Taliesin's poems.

Fifty years ago, it was a fashion to lecture men and nations with a vehemence which we tend to underrate because, possibly, we are less in earnest, and suffer more from mixed sympathies. Arnold in his turn, his earlier poetic impulse declining, and the pressure of the time and the needs of the time increasing, learnt to use his polemic with a touch of genius. Beaconsfield recognised this when he praised his gift of adding incisive phrases and proverbial catch-words to the currency. As time went on, he accepted the function that chance, a genuine zeal for policemaning the British nation into intellectual good conduct, and his own temperament had helped to thrust upon him. The tendency was increased possibly by his work as an educationist who, having constantly to inspect schools and watch and try to correct the education of schoolboys, was led by force of habit to apply the same rule to their elders.

He was elected to his Oxford Chair of Poetry in 1857. Two years after that date we find him writing the characteristic Italian tract in which he draws for the first time some of those comparisons of the English people with other nations which he invoked in so many of his succeeding prose pages. Parts of it read like an anticipation of his younger contemporary Swinburne's song, in which that poet said, addressing Italy:

> "Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,
> But live thou though they die;
> Let their flags fade as flowers that storm can mar,
> But thine be like the star;

Let England's, if it float not for men free,
Fall, and forget the sea;
Let France's, if it shadow a hateful head
Drop as a leaf drops dead!"

It would have been interesting to reprint this forgotten pamphlet, one of the tell-tale things thrown up by the ferment at that time, and very typical of Arnold's probation. There is only space here, however, for one passage—that in which he applies his favourite test of openness to ideas, addressing the English aristocracy as possible arbiters in the fate of Italy.

Having a want of sympathy for ideas, aristocracies, he wrote, "have generally been most successful in times when force and firmness and vigour of character were of more account than ideas, in the stages when society is forming. They have generally been unfortunate in times of advanced civilisation, in times when a complicated society has arisen, in times which imperiously demand the comprehension of ideas and the application of them. The Roman aristocracy fell because they would not deal with the ideas of the mature and modern period of Rome, when her struggle for existence ceased after the Punic Wars. The Venetian and French aristocracies fell because they could not deal with the ideas of modern Europe." There follows in the same context a darkly significant reference to Germany and her national function, which reads strangely to-day when a marked type of Prussophobia has become almost epidemic in Britain.

A further development of the theories of Arnold may be traced in the books evoked by his office as an inspector of schools and as a roving commissioner of education. Two essays in the second part of this volume represent his critical activity on that plane of thought. "My Countrymen" he reprinted afterwards as an appendix to "Friendship's Garland," while the important essay on "Education and the State" formed the introduction to his volume on "The Popular Education of France" published by him in 1861. Two others deal with Dante and Beatrice, a review in effect of Sir Theodore

Martin's essay on the Vita Nuova, and with his friend Dean Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church. In the latter he clearly anticipates some of the lay-sermons he was to deliver later to the English people in a voice by turns taunting and prophetic. The addition of the two striking articles by Lord Strangford, and the passages from D. W. Nash's forgotten book on Taliesin, the book that brought Arnold to his feet in the debate, is almost indispensable if we would to-day understand all his cross-references to those writers. Both of them, as we see now, were really working as he was for the deliverance of Celtic literature from the fanatics on one hand and the Philistines on the other. Like him, they helped to clear the issues.

One might do worse, in trying, finally, to reconcile the Arnold of Tristram, St. Brandan, and the poems, with Arnold the critic, than turn to the story of Gwion in the Mabinogion, a story that must have appealed to him peculiarly. Caridwen, who is in the Welsh legends the half-goddess, witch or wise woman, an embodiment of the spirit of nature, was one day making incantations, when she set Gwion to watch her cauldron lest it should boil over. But it happened that three drops of the charmed liquor spirted out and fell upon his finger. Thereupon, "by reason of their great hotness, Gwion put his finger to his mouth; and the same instant he put those marvel-working drops to his lips, he foresaw everything that was to come."

Matthew Arnold, like Gwion, was for ever stirring the "cauldron of Inspiration and Science" (so it is termed in the story), and it was pretty early in his career when the three burning drops spirted from the fire and touched his finger. They taught him not only his faith in the magic of Caridwen and the wild herbs she brewed—good for poets, especially good for the English people—but something too of that uncertain gift of foreseeing and foreboding which made him into a minor prophet of the nineteenth century.

E. R.

The following is a list of Matthew Arnold's works:—

Alaric at Rome (Rugby Prize Poem), 1840; Cromwell (Newdigate Prize), 1843; The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems (Forsaken Merman, Mycerinus, etc.), 1849; Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems (Tristram and Iseult, etc.), 1852; Poems, with Prefatory Essay (Sohrab and Rustum, Scholar Gipsy, etc.), 1853, 1854, 1857: Poems: Second Series (Balder Dead, etc.), 1855; Merope: A Tragedy, 1858; England and the Italian Question, 1859; On Translating Homer (Three Lectures), 1861; Popular Education of France, 1861; On Translating Homer: Last Words, 1862; A French Eton, 1864; Essays in Criticism, 1865, 1869, 1889; New Poems (Thyrsis, A Southern Night, etc.), 1867; St. Brandan (Poem), 1869; On the Study of Celtic Literature, 1867; Schools and Universities on the Continent, 1868; Culture and Anarchy (from *Cornhill*), 1869; St. Paul and Protestantism (from *Cornhill*), 1870; Friendship's Garland, 1871; Literature and Dogma, 1873; God and the Bible, 1875; Last Essays on Church and Religion, 1877; Mixed Essays, 1879; Irish Essays, and Others, 1882; Discourses in America, 1885: Special Report on Elementary Education Abroad, 1886; Civilisation in the United States, from *Nineteenth* and *Murray's Magazine*, 1888; Essays in Criticism: Second Series, 1888; Report on Elementary Schools (Ed. by Sir Francis Sandford, 1889), on Home Rule for Ireland (privately printed from two letters to the *Times*, 1891,); Poems: Collected Ed., 1869, 1877, 1885, 1890; Works (with Bibliography), 15 vols., 1903; Letters: ed. G. W. E. Russell, 1895; Life: George Saintsbury (Modern English Writers); H. W. Paul (English Men of Letters); W. C. Brownell in Victorian Prose Masters; G. W. E. Russell (Literary Lives).

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INTRODUCTION

THE following remarks on the study of Celtic Literature formed the substance of four lectures given by me last year and the year before in the chair of poetry at Oxford. They were first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and are now reprinted from thence. Again and again, in the course of them, I have marked the very humble scope intended; which is, not to treat any special branch of scientific Celtic studies (a task for which I am quite incompetent), but to point out the many directions in which the results of those studies offer matter of general interest, and to insist on the benefit we may all derive from knowing the Celt and things Celtic more thoroughly. It was impossible, however, to avoid touching on certain points of ethnology and philology, which can be securely handled only by those who have made these sciences the object of special study. Here the mere literary critic must owe his whole safety to his tact in choosing authorities to follow, and whatever he advances must be understood as advanced with a sense of the insecurity which, after all, attaches to such a mode of proceeding, and as put forward provisionally, by way of hypothesis rather than of confident assertion.

To mark clearly to the reader both this provisional character of much which I advance, and my own sense of it, I have inserted, as a check upon some of the positions adopted in the text, notes and comments with which Lord Strangford has kindly

furnished me. Lord Strangford is hardly less distinguished for knowing ethnology and languages so scientifically than for knowing so much of them; and his interest, even from the vantage-ground of his scientific knowledge, and after making all due reserves on points of scientific detail, in my treatment—with merely the resources and point of view of a literary critic at my command—of such a subject as the study of Celtic Literature, is the most encouraging assurance I could have received that my attempt is not altogether a vain one.

Both Lord Strangford and others whose opinion I respect have said that I am unjust in calling Mr. Nash, the acute and learned author of *Taliesin or the Bards and Druids of Britain*, a "Celt-hater." "He is a denouncer," says Lord Strangford in a note on this expression, "of Celtic extravagance, that is all; he is an anti-Philocelt, a very different thing from an anti-Celt, and quite indispensable in scientific inquiry. As Philoceltism has hitherto—hitherto, remember—meant nothing but uncritical acceptance and irrational admiration of the beloved object's sayings and doings, without reference to truth one way or the other, it is surely in the interest of science to support him in the main. In tracing the workings of old Celtic leaven in poems which embody the Celtic soul of all time in a mediæval form, I do not see that you come into any necessary opposition with him, for your concern is with the spirit, his with the substance only." I entirely agree with almost all which Lord Strangford here urges, and indeed, so sincere is my respect for Mr. Nash's critical discernment and learning, and so unhesitating my recognition of the usefulness, in many respects, of the work of demolition performed

by him, that in originally designating him as a Celt-hater, I hastened to add, as the reader will see by referring to the passage,[1] words of explanation and apology for so calling him. But I thought then, and I think still, that Mr. Nash, in pursuing his work of demolition, too much puts out of sight the positive and constructive performance for which this work of demolition is to clear the ground. I thought then, and I think still, that in this Celtic controversy, as in other controversies, it is most desirable both to believe and to profess that the work of construction is the fruitful and important work, and that we are demolishing only to prepare for it. Mr. Nash's scepticism seems to me—in the aspect in which his work, on the whole, shows it—too absolute, too stationary, too much without a future; and this tends to make it, for the non-Celtic part of his readers, less fruitful than it otherwise would be, and for his Celtic readers, harsh and repellent. I have therefore suffered my remarks on Mr. Nash still to stand, though with a little modification; but I hope he will read them by the light of these explanations, and that he will believe my sense of esteem for his work to be a thousand times stronger than my sense of difference from it.

To lead towards solid ground, where the Celt may with legitimate satisfaction point to traces of the gifts and workings of his race, and where the Englishman may find himself induced to sympathise with that satisfaction and to feel an interest in it, is the design of all the considerations urged in the following essay. Kindly taking the will for the deed, a Welshman and an old acquaintance of mine, Mr. Hugh Owen, received my remarks with so much

[1] See p. 35 of the following essay.

cordiality, that he asked me to come to the Eisteddfod last summer at Chester, and there to read a paper on some topic of Celtic literature or antiquities. In answer to this flattering proposal of Mr. Owen's, I wrote him a letter which appeared at the time in several newspapers, and of which the following extract preserves all that is of any importance,—

"My knowledge of Welsh matters is so utterly insignificant that it would be impertinence in me, under any circumstances, to talk about those matters to an assemblage of persons, many of whom have passed their lives in studying them.

"Your gathering acquires more interest every year. Let me venture to say that you have to avoid two dangers in order to work all the good which your friends could desire. You have to avoid the danger of giving offence to practical men by retarding the spread of the English language in the principality. I believe that to preserve and honour the Welsh language and literature is quite compatible with not thwarting or delaying for a single hour the introduction, so undeniably useful, of a knowledge of English among all classes in Wales. You have to avoid, again, the danger of alienating men of science by a blind, partial, and uncritical treatment of your national antiquities. Mr. Stephens's excellent book, *The Literature of the Cymry*, shows how perfectly Welshmen can avoid this danger if they will.

"When I see the enthusiasm these Eisteddfods can awaken in your whole people, and then think of the tastes, the literature, the amusements, of our own lower and middle class, I am filled with admiration for you. It is a consoling thought, and one which history allows us to entertain, that nations disinherited of political success may yet leave their

mark on the world's progress, and contribute powerfully to the civilisation of mankind. We in England have come to that point when the continued advance and greatness of our nation is threatened by one cause, and one cause above all. Far more than by the helplessness of an aristocracy whose day is fast coming to an end, far more than by the rawness of a lower class whose day is only just beginning, we are emperilled by what I call the 'Philistinism' of our middle class. On the side of beauty and taste, vulgarity; on the side of morals and feeling, coarseness; on the side of mind and spirit, unintelligence—this is Philistinism. Now, then, is the moment for the greater delicacy and spirituality of the Celtic peoples who are blended with us, if it be but wisely directed, to make itself prized and honoured. In a certain measure the children of Taliesin and Ossian have now an opportunity for renewing the famous feat of the Greeks, and conquering their conquerors. No service England can render the Celts by giving you a share in her many good qualities, can surpass that which the Celts can at this moment render England, by communicating to us some of theirs."

Now certainly, in that letter, written to a Welshman and on the occasion of a Welsh festival, I enlarged on the merits of the Celtic spirit and of its works, rather than on their demerits. It would have been offensive and inhuman to do otherwise. When an acquaintance asks you to write his father's epitaph, you do not generally seize that opportunity for saying that his father was blind of one eye, and had an unfortunate habit of not paying his tradesmen's bills. But the weak side of Celtism and of its Celtic glorifiers, the danger against which they have to guard,

is clearly indicated in that letter; and in the remarks reprinted in this volume—remarks which were the original cause of Mr. Owen's writing to me, and must have been fully present to his mind when he read my letter—the shortcomings both of the Celtic race, and of the Celtic students of its literature and antiquities, are unreservedly marked, and, so far as is necessary, blamed.[1] It was, indeed, not my purpose to make blame the chief part of what I said; for the Celts, like other people, are to be meliorated rather by developing their gifts than by chastising their defects. The wise man, says Spinoza admirably, "*de humana impotentia non nisi parce loqui curabit, at largiter de humana virtute seu potentia.*" But so far as condemnation of Celtic failure was needful towards preparing the way for the growth of Celtic virtue, I used condemnation.

The *Times*, however, prefers a shorter and sharper method of dealing with the Celts, and in a couple of leading articles, having the Chester Eisteddfod and my letter to Mr. Hugh Owen for their text, it developed with great frankness, and in its usual forcible style, its own views for the amelioration of Wales and its people. *Cease to do evil, learn to do good*, was the upshot of its exhortations to the Welsh; by *evil*, the *Times* understanding all things Celtic, and by *good*, all things English. "The Welsh language is the curse of Wales. Its prevalence, and the ignorance of English have excluded, and even now exclude the Welsh people from the civilisation of their English neighbours. An Eisteddfod is one of the most mischievous and selfish pieces of sentimentalism which could possibly be perpetrated. It is simply a foolish interference with the natural

[1] See particularly pp. 20, 21 of the following essay.

progress of civilisation and prosperity. If it is desirable that the Welsh should talk English, it is monstrous folly to encourage them in a loving fondness for their old language. Not only the energy and power, but the intelligence and music of Europe have come mainly from Teutonic sources, and this glorification of everything Celtic, if it were not pedantry, would be sheer ignorance. The sooner all Welsh specialities disappear from the face of the earth the better."

And I need hardly say that I myself, as so often happens to me at the hands of my own countrymen, was cruelly judged by the *Times*, and most severely treated. What I said to Mr. Owen about the spread of the English language in Wales being quite compatible with preserving and honouring the Welsh language and literature, was tersely set down as "arrant nonsense," and I was characterised as "a sentimentalist who talks nonsense about the children of Taliesin and Ossian, and whose dainty taste requires something more flimsy than the strong sense and sturdy morality of his fellow Englishmen."

As I said before, I am unhappily inured to having these harsh interpretations put by my fellow Englishmen upon what I write, and I no longer cry out about it. And then, too, I have made a study of the Corinthian or leading article style, and know its exigences, and that they are no more to be quarrelled with than the law of gravitation. So, for my part, when I read these asperities of the *Times*, my mind did not dwell very much on my own concern in them; but what I said to myself, as I put the newspaper down, was this: "*Behold England's difficulty in governing Ireland!*"

I pass by the dauntless assumption that the

agricultural peasant whom we in England, without Eisteddfods, succeed in developing, is so much finer a product of civilisation than the Welsh peasant, retarded by these " pieces of sentimentalism." I will be content to suppose that our " strong sense and sturdy morality " are as admirable and as universal as the *Times* pleases. But even supposing this, I will ask: did any one ever hear of strong sense and sturdy morality being thrust down other people's throats in this fashion? Might not these divine English gifts, and the English language in which they are preached, have a better chance of making their way among the poor Celtic heathen, if the English apostle delivered his message a little more agreeably? There is nothing like love and admiration for bringing people to a likeness with what they love and admire; but the Englishman seems never to dream of employing these influences upon a race he wants to fuse with himself. He employs simply material interests for his work of fusion; and, beyond these, nothing except scorn and rebuke. Accordingly there is no vital union between him and the races he has annexed; and while France can truly boast of her " magnificent unity," a unity of spirit no less than of name between all the people who compose her, in England the Englishman proper is in union of spirit with no one except other Englishmen proper like himself. His Welsh and Irish fellow-citizens are hardly more amalgamated with him now than they were when Wales and Ireland were first conquered, and the true unity of even these small islands has yet to be achieved. When these papers of mine on the Celtic genius and literature first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, they brought me, as was natural, many communications from Welshmen and Irishmen

having an interest in the subject; and one could not but be painfully struck, in reading these communications, to see how profound a feeling of aversion and severance from the English they in general manifested. Who can be surprised at it, when he observes the strain of the *Times* in the articles just quoted, and remembers that this is the characteristic strain of the Englishman in commenting on whatsoever is not himself? And then, with our boundless faith in machinery, we English expect the Welshman as a matter of course to grow attached to us, because we invite him to do business with us, and let him hold any number of public meetings and publish all the newspapers he likes! When shall we learn, that what attaches people to us is the spirit we are of, and not the machinery we employ?

Last year there was a project of holding a Breton Eisteddfod at Quimper in Brittany, and the French Home Secretary, whether wishing to protect the magnificent unity of France from inroads of Bretonism, or fearing lest the design should be used in furtherance of Legitimist intrigues, or from whatever motive, issued an order which prohibited the meeting. If Mr. Walpole had issued an order prohibiting the Chester Eisteddfod, all the Englishmen from Cornwall to John o' Groat's House would have rushed to the rescue; and our strong sense and sturdy morality would never have stopped gnashing their teeth and rending their garments till the prohibition was rescinded. What a pity our strong sense and sturdy morality fail to perceive that words like those of the *Times* create a far keener sense of estrangement and dislike than acts like those of the French Minister! Acts like those of the French Minister are attributed to reasons of State, and the

Government is held blameable for them, not the French people. Articles like those of the *Times* are attributed to the want of sympathy and of sweetness of disposition in the English nature, and the whole English people gets the blame of them. And deservedly; for from some such ground of want of sympathy and sweetness in the English nature, do articles like those of the *Times* come, and to some such ground do they make appeal. The sympathetic and social virtues of the French nature, on the other hand, actually repair the breaches made by oppressive deeds of the Government, and create, among populations joined with France as the Welsh and Irish are joined with England, a sense of liking and attachment towards the French people. The French Government may discourage the German language in Alsace and prohibit Eisteddfods in Brittany; but the *Journal des Débats* never treats German music and poetry as mischievous lumber, nor tells the Bretons that the sooner all Breton specialities disappear from the face of the earth the better. Accordingly, the Bretons and Alsatians have come to feel themselves a part of France, and to feel pride in bearing the French name; while the Welsh and Irish obstinately refuse to amalgamate with us, and will not admire the Englishman as he admires himself, however much the *Times* may scold them and rate them, and assure them there is nobody on earth so admirable.

And at what a moment does it assure them of this, good heavens! At a moment when the ice is breaking up in England, and we are all beginning at last to see how much real confusion and insufficiency it covered; when, whatever may be the merits—and they are great—of the Englishman and of his strong sense and sturdy morality, it is growing more and

more evident that, if he is to endure and advance, he must transform himself, must add something to his strong sense and sturdy morality, or at least must give to these excellent gifts of his a new development. My friend Mr. Goldwin Smith says, in his eloquent way, that England is the favourite of Heaven. Far be it from me to say that England is not the favourite of Heaven; but at this moment she reminds me more of what the prophet Isaiah calls, "a bull in a net." She has satisfied herself in all departments with clap-trap and routine so long, and she is now so astounded at finding they will not serve her turn any longer! And this is the moment, when Englishism pure and simple, which with all its fine qualities managed always to make itself singularly unattractive, is losing that imperturbable faith in its untransformed self which at any rate made it imposing—this is the moment when our great organ tells the Celts that everything of theirs not English is "simply a foolish interference with the natural progress of civilisation and prosperity;" and poor Talhaiarn, venturing to remonstrate, is commanded "to drop his outlandish title, and to refuse even to talk Welsh in Wales!"

But let us leave the dead to bury their dead, and let us who are alive go unto perfection. Let the Celtic members of this empire consider that they too have to transform themselves; and though the summons to transform themselves be often conveyed harshly and brutally, and with the cry to root up their wheat as well as their tares, yet that is no reason why the summons should not be followed so far as their tares are concerned. Let them consider that they are inextricably bound up with us, and that, if the suggestions in the following pages have

any truth, we English, alien and uncongenial to our Celtic partners as we may have hitherto shown ourselves, have notwithstanding, beyond perhaps any other nation, a thousand latent springs of possible sympathy with them. Let them consider that new ideas and forces are stirring in England, that day by day these new ideas and forces gain in power, and that almost every one of them is the friend of the Celt and not his enemy. And, whether our Celtic partners will consider this or no, at any rate let us ourselves, all of us who are proud of being the ministers of these new ideas, work incessantly to procure for them a wider and more faithful application; and to remove the main ground of the Celt's alienation from the Englishman, by substituting, in place of that type of Englishman with whom alone the Celt has too long been familiar, a new type, more intelligent, more gracious, and more humane.

ON THE STUDY

OF

CELTIC LITERATURE

THE summer before last I spent some weeks at Llandudno, on the Welsh coast. The best lodging-houses at Llandudno look eastward, towards Liverpool; and from that Saxon hive swarms are incessantly issuing, crossing the bay, and taking possession of the beach and the lodging-houses. Guarded by the Great and Little Orme's Head, and alive with the Saxon invaders from Liverpool, the eastern bay is an attractive point of interest, and many visitors to Llandudno never contemplate anything else. But, putting aside the charm of the Liverpool steamboats, perhaps the view, on this side, a little dissatisfies one after a while; the horizon wants mystery, the sea wants beauty, the coast wants verdure, and has a too bare austereness and aridity. At last one turns round and looks westward. Everything is changed. Over the mouth of the Conway and its sands is the eternal softness and mild light of the west; the low line of the mystic Anglesey, and the precipitous Penmaenmawr, and the great group of Carnedd Llewelyn and Carnedd David and their brethren fading away, hill behind hill, in an aerial haze, make the horizon; between the foot of Penmaenmawr and the bending coast of Anglesey, the sea, a silver stream, disappears one knows not whither. On this side

Wales — Wales, where the past still lives, where every place has its tradition, every name its poetry, and where the people, the genuine people, still knows this past, this tradition, this poetry, and lives with it, and clings to it; while, alas, the prosperous Saxon on the other side, the invader from Liverpool and Birkenhead, has long ago forgotten his. And the promontory where Llandudno stands is the very centre of this tradition; it is Creuddyn, *the bloody city*, where every stone has its story; there, opposite its decaying rival, Conway Castle, is Diganwy, not decaying but long since utterly decayed, some crumbling foundations on a crag-top and nothing more —Diganwy, where Mael-gwyn shut up Elphin, and where Taliesin came to free him. Below, in a fold of the hill, is Llan-rhos, the church of the marsh, where the same Mael-gwyn, a British prince of real history, a bold and licentious chief, the original, it is said, of Arthur's Lancelot, shut himself up in the church to avoid the Yellow Plague, and peeped out through a hole in the door, and saw the monster and died. Behind among the woods, is Glod-daeth, *the place of feasting*, where the bards were entertained; and further away, up the valley of the Conway towards Llanrwst, is the Lake of Ceirionydd and Taliesin's grave. Or, again, looking seawards and Anglesey-wards you have Pen-mon, Seiriol's isle and priory, where Mael-gwyn lies buried; you have the *Sands of Lamentation* and Llys Helig, *Helig's Mansion*, a mansion under the waves, a sea-buried palace and realm. *Hac ibat Simois ; hic est Sigeia tellus.*

As I walked up and down, last August year, looking at the waves as they washed this Sigeian land which has never had its Homer, and listening with

curiosity to the strange, unfamiliar speech of its old possessors' obscure descendants — bathing people, vegetable-sellers, and donkey boys — who were all about me, suddenly I heard, through the stream of unknown Welsh, words, not English, indeed, but still familiar. They came from a French nursery-maid, with some children. Profoundly ignorant of her relationship, this Gaulish Celt moved among her British cousins, speaking her polite neo-Latin tongue, and full of compassionate contempt, probably, for the Welsh barbarians and their jargon. What a revolution was here! How had the star of this daughter of Gomer waxed, while the star of these Cymry, his sons, had waned! What a difference of fortune in the two, since the days when, speaking the same language, they left their common dwelling-place in the heart of Asia; since the Cimmerians of the Euxine came in upon their western kinsmen, the sons of the giant Galates; since the sisters, Gaul and Britain, cut the mistletoe in their forests, and saw the coming of Cæsar! *Blanc, rouge, rocher, champ, église, seigneur* — these words, by which the Gallo-Roman Celt now names white, and red, and rock, and field, and church, and lord, are no part of the speech of his true ancestors, they are words he has learnt; but since he learnt them they have had a world-wide success, and we all teach them to our children, and armies speaking them have domineered in every city of that Germany by which the British Celt was broken, and in the train of these armies, Saxon auxiliaries, a humbled contingent, have been fain to follow—the poor Welshman still says, in the genuine tongue of his ancestors,[1] *gwyn, goch, craig,*

[1] Lord Strangford remarks on this passage:—" Your Gomer and your Cimmerians are of course only lay figures, to be

maes, llan, arglwydd ; but his land is a province, and his history petty, and his Saxon subduers scout his speech as an obstacle to civilisation, and the echo of all its kindred in other lands is growing every day fainter and more feeble; gone in Cornwall, going in Brittany and the Scotch Highlands, going, too, in Ireland, and there, above all, the badge of the beaten race, the property of the vanquished.

But the Celtic genius was just then preparing, in Llandudno, to have its hour of revival. Workmen were busy in putting up a large tent-like wooden building, which attracted the eye of every new-comer, and which my little boys believed (their wish, no doubt, being father to their belief) to be a circus. It turned out, however, to be no circus for

accepted in the rhetorical and subjective sense. As such I accept them, but I enter a protest against the ' genuine tongue of his ancestors.' Modern Celtic tongues are to the old Celtic heard by Julius Cæsar, broadly speaking, what the modern Romanic tongues are to Cæsar's own Latin. Welsh, in fact, is a *detritus ;* a language in the category of modern French, or, to speak less roughly and with a closer approximation, of old Provençal, not in the category of Lithuanian, much less in the category of Basque. By true inductive research, based on an accurate comparison of such forms of Celtic speech, oral and recorded, as we now possess, modern philology has, in so far as was possible, succeeded in restoring certain forms of the parent speech, and in so doing has achieved not the least striking of its many triumphs; for those very forms thus restored have since been verified past all cavil by their actual discovery in the old Gaulish inscriptions recently come to light. The *phonesis* of Welsh as it stands is modern, not primitive; its grammar—the verbs excepted—is constructed out of the fragments of its earlier forms, and its vocabulary is strongly Romanised, two out of the six words here given being Latin of the Empire. Rightly understood, this enhances the value of modern Celtic instead of depreciating it, because it serves to rectify it. To me it is a wonder that Welsh should have retained so much of its integrity under the iron pressure of four hundred years of Roman dominion. Modern Welsh tenacity and cohesive power under English pressure is nothing compared with what that must have been."

Castor and Pollux, but a temple for Apollo and the Muses. It was the place where the Eisteddfod, or Bardic Congress of Wales, was about to be held; a meeting which has for its object (I quote the words of its promoters) "the diffusion of useful knowledge, the eliciting of native talent, and the cherishing of love of home and honourable fame by the cultivation of poetry, music, and art." My little boys were disappointed; but I, whose circus days are over, I, who have a professional interest in poetry, and who, also, hating all one-sidedness and oppression, wish nothing better than that the Celtic genius should be able to show itself to the world and to make its voice heard, was delighted. I took my ticket, and waited impatiently for the day of opening. The day came, an unfortunate one; storms of wind, clouds of dust, an angry, dirty sea. The Saxons who arrived by the Liverpool steamers looked miserable; even the Welsh who arrived by land — whether they were discomposed by the bad morning, or by the monstrous and crushing tax which the London and North-Western Railway Company levies on all whom it transports across those four miles of marshy peninsula between Conway and Llandudno —did not look happy. First we went to the Gorsedd, or preliminary congress for conferring the degree of bard. The Gorsedd was held in the open air, at the windy corner of a street, and the morning was not favourable to open-air solemnities. The Welsh, too, share, it seems to me, with their Saxon invaders, an inaptitude for show and spectacle. Show and spectacle are better managed by the Latin race, and those whom it has moulded; the Welsh, like us, are a little awkward and resourceless in the organisation of a festival. The presiding genius of the mystic

circle, in our hideous nineteenth-century costume relieved only by a green scarf, the wind drowning his voice and the dust powdering his whiskers, looked thoroughly wretched; so did the aspirants for bardic honours; and I believe, after about an hour of it, we all of us, as we stood shivering round the sacred stones, began half to wish for the Druid's sacrificial knife to end our sufferings. But the Druid's knife is gone from his hands; so we sought the shelter of the Eisteddfod building.

The sight inside was not lively. The president and his supporters mustered strong on the platform. On the floor the one or two front benches were pretty well filled, but their occupants were for the most part Saxons, who came there from curiosity, not from enthusiasm; and all the middle and back benches, where should have been the true enthusiasts — the Welsh people — were nearly empty. The president, I am sure, showed a national spirit which was admirable. He addressed us Saxons in our own language, and called us "the English branch of the descendants of the ancient Britons." We received the compliment with the impassive dulness which is the characteristic of our nature; and the lively Celtic nature, which should have made up for the dulness of ours, was absent. A lady who sat by me, and who was the wife, I found, of a distinguished bard on the platform, told me, with emotion in her look and voice, how dear were these solemnities to the heart of her people, how deep was the interest which is aroused by them. I believe her, but still the whole performance, on that particular morning, was incurably lifeless. The recitation of the prize compositions began: pieces of verse and prose in the Welsh language, an essay

on punctuality being, if I remember right, one of them; a poem on the march of Havelock, another. This went on for some time. Then Dr. Vaughan —the well-known Nonconformist minister, a Welshman, and a good patriot—addressed us in English. His speech was a powerful one, and he succeeded, I confess, in sending a faint thrill through our front benches; but it was the old familiar thrill which we have all of us felt a thousand times in Saxon chapels and meeting-halls, and had nothing bardic about it. I stepped out, and in the street I came across an acquaintance fresh from London and the parliamentary session. In a moment the spell of the Celtic genius was forgotten, the Philistinism of our Saxon nature made itself felt; and my friend and I walked up and down by the roaring waves, talking not of ovates and bards, and triads and englyns, but of the sewage question, and the glories of our local self-government, and the mysterious perfections of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

I believe it is admitted, even by the admirers of Eisteddfods in general, that this particular Eisteddfod was not a success. Llandudno, it is said, was not the right place for it. Held in Conway Castle, as a few years ago it was, and its spectators—an enthusiastic multitude—filling the grand old ruin, I can imagine it a most impressive and interesting sight, even to a stranger labouring under the terrible disadvantage of being ignorant of the Welsh language. But even seen as I saw it at Llandudno, it had the power to set one thinking. An Eisteddfod is, no doubt, a kind of Olympic meeting; and that the common people of Wales should care for such a thing, shows something Greek in them, something spiritual, something humane, something (I am afraid one

must add) which in the English common people is not to be found. This line of reflection has been followed by the accomplished Bishop of St. David's, and by the *Saturday Review;* it is just, it is fruitful, and those who pursued it merit our best thanks. But, from peculiar circumstances, the Llandudno meeting was, as I have said, such as not at all to suggest ideas of Olympia, and of a multitude touched by the divine flame, and hanging on the lips of Pindar. It rather suggested the triumph of the prosaic, practical Saxon, and the approaching extinction of an enthusiasm which he derides as factitious, a literature which he disdains as trash, a language which he detests as a nuisance.

I must say I quite share the opinion of my brother Saxons as to the practical inconvenience of perpetuating the speaking of Welsh. It may cause a moment's distress to one's imagination when one hears that the last Cornish peasant who spoke the old tongue of Cornwall is dead; but, no doubt, Cornwall is the better for adopting English, for becoming more thoroughly one with the rest of the country. The fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the natural course of things irresistibly tends; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilisation, and modern civilisation is a real, legitimate force; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time. The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself. Traders and tourists do excellent service by

pushing the English wedge further and further into the heart of the principality; Ministers of Education, by hammering it harder and harder into the elementary schools. Nor, perhaps, can one have much sympathy with the literary cultivation of Welsh as an instrument of living literature; and in this respect Eisteddfods encourage, I think, a fantastic and mischief-working delusion. For all serious purposes in modern literature (and trifling purposes in it who would care to encourage?) the language of a Welshman is and must be English; if an Eisteddfod author has anything to say about punctuality or about the march of Havelock, he had much better say it in English; or rather, perhaps, what he has to say on these subjects may as well be said in Welsh, but the moment he has anything of real importance to say, anything the world will the least care to hear, he must speak English. Dilettantism might possibly do much harm here, might mislead and waste and bring to nought a genuine talent. For all modern purposes, I repeat, let us all as soon as possible be one people; let the Welshman speak English, and, if he is an author, let him write English.

So far, I go along with the stream of my brother Saxons; but here, I imagine, I part company with them. They will have nothing to do with the Welsh language and literature on any terms; they would gladly make a clean sweep of it from the face of the earth. I, on certain terms, wish to make a great deal more of it than is made now; and I regard the Welsh literature — or rather, dropping the distinction between Welsh and Irish, Gaels and Cymris, let me say Celtic literature—as an object of very great interest. My brother Saxons have, as is well known, a terrible way with them of wanting to im-

prove everything but themselves off the face of the earth; I have no such passion for finding nothing but myself everywhere; I like variety to exist and to show itself to me, and I would not for the world have the lineaments of the Celtic genius lost. But I know my brother Saxons, I know their strength, and I know that the Celtic genius will make nothing of trying to set up barriers against them in the world of fact and brute force, of trying to hold its own against them as a political and social counter-power, as the soul of a hostile nationality. To me there is something mournful (and at this moment, when one sees what is going on in Ireland, how well may one say so!) in hearing a Welshman or an Irishman make pretensions—natural pretensions, I admit, but how hopelessly vain!—to such a rival self-establishment; there is something mournful in hearing an Englishman scout them. Strength! alas, it is not strength, strength in the material world, which is wanting to us Saxons; we have plenty of strength for swallowing up and absorbing as much as we choose; there is nothing to hinder us from effacing the last poor material remains of that Celtic power which once was everywhere, but has long since, in the race of civilisation, fallen out of sight. We may threaten them with extinction if we will, and may almost say in so threatening them, like Cæsar in threatening with death the tribune Metellus who closed the treasury doors against him: "And when I threaten this, young man, to threaten it is more trouble to me than to do it." It is not in the outward and visible world of material life that the Celtic genius of Wales or Ireland can at this day hope to count for much; it is in the inward world of thought and science. What it *has* been, what it *has* done, let it ask us to

attend to that, as a matter of science and history; not to what it will be or will do, as a matter of modern politics. It cannot count appreciably now as a material power; but, perhaps, if it can get itself thoroughly known as an object of science, it may count for a good deal—far more than we Saxons, most of us, imagine—as a spiritual power.

The bent of our time is towards science, towards knowing things as they are; so the Celt's claims towards having his genius and its works fairly treated, as objects of scientific investigation, the Saxon can hardly reject, when these claims are urged simply on their own merits, and are not mixed up with extraneous pretensions which jeopardise them. What the French call the *science des origines*, the science of origins—a science which is at the bottom of all real knowledge of the actual world, and which is every day growing in interest and importance—is very incomplete without a thorough critical account of the Celts and their genius, language, and literature. This science has still great progress to make, but its progress, made even within the recollection of those of us who are in middle life, has already affected our common notions about the Celtic race; and this change, too, shows how science, the knowing things as they are, may even have salutary practical consequences. I remember, when I was young, I was taught to think of Celt as separated by an impassable gulf from Teuton;[1] my father, in particular, was

[1] Here again let me have the pleasure of quoting Lord Strangford:—"When the Celtic tongues were first taken in hand at the dawn of comparative philological inquiry, the tendency was, for all practical results, to separate them from the Indo-European aggregate, rather than to unite them with it. The great gulf once fixed between them was narrowed on the surface, but it was greatly and indefinitely deepened.

never weary of contrasting them; he insisted much oftener on the separation between us and them than on the separation between us and any other race in the world; in the same way Lord Lyndhurst, in words long famous, called the Irish, "aliens in speech, in religion, in blood." This naturally created a pro-

Their vocabulary and some of their grammar was seen at once to be perfectly Indo-European, but they had no case-endings to their nouns,—none at all in Welsh, none that could be understood in Gaelic; their *phonesis* seemed primeval and inexplicable, and nothing could be made out of their pronouns which could not be equally made out of many wholly un-Aryan languages. They were therefore co-ordinated, not with each single Aryan tongue, but with the general complex of Aryan tongues, and were conceived to be anterior to them and apart from them, as it were the strayed vanguard of European colonisation or conquest from the East. The reason of this misconception was, that their records lay wholly uninvestigated as far as all historical study of the language was concerned, and that nobody troubled himself about the relative age and the development of forms, so that the philologists were fain to take them as they were put into their hands by uncritical or perverse native commentators and writers, whose grammars and dictionaries teemed with blunders and downright forgeries. One thing, and one thing alone, led to the truth: the sheer drudgery of thirteen long years spent by Zeuss in the patient investigation of the most ancient Celtic records, in their actual condition, line by line and letter by letter. Then for the first time the foundation of Celtic research was laid; but the great philologist did not live to see the superstructure which never could have been raised but for him. Prichard was first to indicate the right path, and Bopp, in his monograph of 1839, displayed his incomparable and masterly sagacity as usual, but for want of any trustworthy record of Celtic words and forms to work upon, the truth remained concealed or obscured until the publication of the *Grammatica Celtica*. Dr. Arnold, a man of the past generation, who made more use of the then uncertain and unfixed doctrines of comparative philology in his historical writings than is done by the present generation in the fullest noonday light of the *Vergleichende Grammatik*, was thus justified in his view by the philology of the period, to which he merely gave an enlarged historical expression. The prime fallacy then as now, however, was that of antedating the distinction between Gaelic and Cymric Celts."

found sense of estrangement; it doubled the estrangement which political and religious differences already made between us and the Irish: it seemed to make this estrangement immense, incurable, fatal. It begot a strange reluctance, as any one may see by reading the preface to the great text-book for Welsh poetry, the *Myvyrian Archæology*, published at the beginning of this century, to further—nay, allow—even among quiet, peaceable people like the Welsh, the publication of the documents of their ancient literature, the monuments of the Cymric genius; such was the sense of repulsion, the sense of incompatibility, of radical antagonism, making it seem dangerous to us to let such opposites to ourselves have speech and utterance. Certainly the Jew—the Jew of ancient times, at least — then seemed a thousand degrees nearer than the Celt to us. Puritanism had so assimilated Bible ideas and phraseology; names like Ebenezer, and notions like that of hewing Agag in pieces, came so natural to us, that the sense of affinity between the Teutonic and the Hebrew nature was quite strong; a steady, middle-class Anglo-Saxon much more imagined himself Ehud's cousin than Ossian's. But meanwhile, the pregnant and striking ideas of the ethnologists about the true natural grouping of the human race, the doctrine of a great Indo-European unity, comprising Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Latins, Celts, Teutons, Slavonians, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of a Semitic unity, and of a Mongolian unity, separated by profound distinguishing marks from the Indo-European unity and from one another, was slowly acquiring consistency and popularising itself. So strong and real could the sense of sympathy or antipathy, grounded upon real identity or diversity in race, grow in men

of culture, that we read of a genuine Teuton, Wilhelm von Humboldt, finding, even in the sphere of religion, that sphere where the might of Semitism has been so overpowering, the food which most truly suited his spirit in the productions not of the alien Semitic genius, but of the genius of Greece or India, the Teuton's born kinsfolk of the common Indo-European family. "Towards Semitism he felt himself," we read, "far less drawn;" he had the consciousness of a certain antipathy in the depths of his nature to this, and to its "absorbing, tyrannous, terrorist religion," as to the opener, more flexible Indo-European genius, this religion appeared. "The mere workings of the old man in him!" Semitism will readily reply; and though one can hardly admit this short and easy method of settling the matter, it must be owned that Humboldt's is an extreme case of Indo-Europeanism, useful as letting us see what may be the power of race and primitive constitution, but not likely, in the spiritual sphere, to have many companion cases equalling it. Still, even in this sphere, the tendency is in Humboldt's direction; the modern spirit tends more and more to establish a sense of native diversity between our European bent and the Semitic bent, and to eliminate, even in our religion, certain elements as purely and excessively Semitic, and therefore, in right, not combinable with our European nature, not assimilable by it. This tendency is now quite visible even among ourselves, and even, as I have said, within the great sphere of the Semitic genius, the sphere of religion; and for its justification this tendency appeals to science, the science of origins; it appeals to this science as teaching us which way our natural affinities and repulsions lie. It appeals to this science, and in part it comes

from it; it is, in considerable part, an indirect practical result from it.

In the sphere of politics, too, there has, in the same way, appeared an indirect practical result from this science; the sense of antipathy to the Irish people, of radical estrangement from them, has visibly abated amongst all the better part of us; the remorse for past ill-treatment of them, the wish to make amends, to do them justice, to fairly unite, if possible, in one people with them, has visibly increased; hardly a book on Ireland is now published, hardly a debate on Ireland now passes in Parliament, without this appearing. Fanciful as the notion may at first seem, I am inclined to think that the march of science—science insisting that there is no such original chasm between the Celt and the Saxon as we once popularly imagined, that they are not truly, what Lord Lyndhurst called them, *aliens in blood* from us, that they are our brothers in the great Indo-European family—has had a share, an appreciable share, in producing this changed state of feeling. No doubt, the release from alarm and struggle, the sense of firm possession, solid security, and overwhelming power; no doubt these, allowing and encouraging humane feelings to spring up in us, have done much; no doubt a state of fear and danger, Ireland in hostile conflict with us, our union violently disturbed, might, while it drove back all humane feelings, make also the old sense of utter estrangement revive. Nevertheless, so long as such a malignant revolution of events does not actually come about, so long the new sense of kinship and kindliness lives, works, and gathers strength; and the longer it so lives and works, the more it makes any such malignant revolution im-

probable. And this new, reconciling sense has, I say, its roots in science.

However, on these indirect benefits of science we must not lay too much stress Only this must be allowed; it is clear that there are now in operation two influences, both favourable to a more attentive and impartial study of Celtism than it has yet ever received from us. One is, the strengthening in us of the feeling of Indo-Europeanism; the other, the strengthening in us of the scientific sense generally. The first breaks down barriers between us and the Celt, relaxes the estrangement between us; the second begets the desire to know his case thoroughly, and to be just to it. This is a very different matter from the political and social Celtisation of which certain enthusiasts dream; but it is not to be despised by any one to whom the Celtic genius is dear; and it is possible, while the other is not.

I

To know the Celtic case thoroughly, one must know the Celtic people; and to know them, one must know that by which a people best express themselves—their literature. Few of us have any notion what a mass of Celtic literature is really yet extant and accessible. One constantly finds even very accomplished people, who fancy that the remains of Welsh and Irish literature are as inconsiderable by their volume, as, in their opinion, they are by their intrinsic merit; that these remains consist of a few prose stories, in great part borrowed from the literature of nations more civilised than the Welsh or Irish nation, and of some unintelligible poetry. As to Welsh

literature, they have heard, perhaps, of the *Black Book of Caermarthen*, or of the *Red Book of Hergest*, and they imagine that one or two famous manuscript books like these contain the whole matter. They have no notion that, in real truth, to quote the words of one who is no friend to the high pretensions of Welsh literature, but their most formidable impugner, Mr. Nash: "The Myvyrian manuscripts alone, now deposited in the British Museum, amount to forty-seven volumes of poetry, of various sizes, containing about 4700 pieces of poetry, in 16,000 pages, besides about 2000 englynion or epigrammatic stanzas. There are also, in the same collection, fifty-three volumes of prose, in about 15,300 pages, containing a great many curious documents on various subjects. Besides these, which were purchased of the widow of the celebrated Owen Jones, the editor of the *Myvyrian Archæology*, there are a vast number of collections of Welsh manuscripts in London, and in the libraries of the gentry of the principality." The *Myvyrian Archæology*, here spoken of by Mr. Nash, I have already mentioned; he calls its editor, Owen Jones, celebrated; he is not so celebrated but that he claims a word, in passing, from a professor of poetry. He was a Denbighshire *statesman*, as we say in the north, born before the middle of last century, in that vale of Myvyr, which has given its name to his archæology. From his childhood he had that passion for the old treasures of his country's literature, which to this day, as I have said, in the common people of Wales is so remarkable; these treasures were unprinted, scattered, difficult of access, jealously guarded. "More than once," says Edward Lhuyd, who in his *Archæologia Britannica*, brought out by him in 1707, would gladly have given them to

the world, " more than once I had a promise from the owner, and the promise was afterwards retracted at the instigation of certain persons, pseudo-politicians, as I think, rather than men of letters." So Owen Jones went up, a young man of nineteen, to London, and got employment in a furrier's shop in Thames Street; for forty years, with a single object in view, he worked at his business; and at the end of that time his object was won. He had risen in his employment till the business had become his own, and he was now a man of considerable means; but those means had been sought by him for one purpose only, the purpose of his life, the dream of his youth—the giving permanence and publicity to the treasures of his national literature. Gradually he got manuscript after manuscript transcribed, and at last, in 1801, he jointly with two friends brought out in three large volumes, printed in double columns, his *Myvyrian Archæology of Wales*. The book is full of imperfections, it presented itself to a public which could not judge of its importance, and it brought upon its author, in his life-time, more attack than honour. He died not long afterwards, and now he lies buried in Allhallows Church, in London, with his tomb turned towards the east, away from the green vale of Clwyd and the mountains of his native Wales; but his book is the great repertory of the literature of his nation, the comparative study of languages and literatures gains every day more followers, and no one of these followers, at home or abroad, touches Welsh literature without paying homage to the Denbighshire peasant's name; if the bards' glory and his own are still matter of moment to him—*si quid mentem mortalia tangunt*—he may be satisfied.

Even the printed stock of early Welsh literature is, therefore, considerable, and the manuscript stock of it is very great indeed. Of Irish literature, the stock, printed and manuscript, is truly vast; the work of cataloguing and describing this has been admirably performed by another remarkable man, who died only the other day, Mr. Eugene O'Curry. Obscure Scaliger of a despised literature, he deserves some weightier voice to praise him than the voice of an unlearned bellettristic trifler like me; he belongs to the race of the giants in literary research and industry—a race now almost extinct. Without a literary education, and impeded too, it appears, by much trouble of mind and infirmity of body, he has accomplished such a thorough work of classification and description for the chaotic mass of Irish literature, that the student has now half his labour saved, and needs only to use his materials as Eugene O'Curry hands them to him. It was as a professor in the Catholic University in Dublin that O'Curry gave the lectures in which he has done the student this service; it is touching to find that these lectures, a splendid tribute of devotion to the Celtic cause, had no hearer more attentive, more sympathising, than a man, himself, too, the champion of a cause more interesting than prosperous—one of those causes which please noble spirits, but do not please destiny, which have Cato's adherence, but not Heaven's—Dr. Newman. Eugene O'Curry, in these lectures of his, taking as his standard the quarto page of Dr. O'Donovan's edition of the *Annals of the Four Masters* (and this printed monument of one branch of Irish literature occupies by itself, let me say in passing, seven large quarto volumes, containing 4215 pages of closely printed matter), Eugene O'Curry

says, that the great vellum manuscript books belonging to Trinity College, Dublin, and to the Royal Irish Academy—books with fascinating titles, the *Book of the Dun Cow*, the *Book of Leinster*, the *Book of Ballymote*, the *Speckled Book*, the *Book of Lecain*, the *Yellow Book of Lecain*—have, between them, matter enough to fill 11,400 of these pages; the other vellum manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, have matter enough to fill 8200 pages more; and the paper manuscripts of Trinity College, and the Royal Irish Academy together, would fill, he says, 30,000 such pages more. The ancient laws of Ireland, the so-called Brehon laws, which a commission is now publishing, were not as yet completely transcribed when O'Curry wrote; but what had even then been transcribed was sufficient, he says, to fill nearly 8000 of Dr. O'Donovan's pages. Here are, at any rate, materials enough with a vengeance. These materials fall, of course, into several divisions. The most literary of these divisions, the *Tales*, consisting of *Historic Tales* and *Imaginative Tales*, distributes the contents of its *Historic Tales* as follows:—Battles, voyages, sieges, tragedies, cow-spoils, courtships, adventures, land-expeditions, sea-expeditions, banquets, elopements, loves, lake-irruptions, colonisations, visions. Of what a treasure-house of resources for the history of Celtic life and the Celtic genius does that bare list, even by itself, call up the image! The *Annals of the Four Masters* give "the years of foundations and destructions of churches and castles, the obituaries of remarkable persons, the inaugurations of kings, the battles of chiefs, the contests of clans, the ages of bards, abbots, bishops, etc."[1] Through other

[1] Dr. O'Conor in his *Catalogue of the Stowe MSS.* (quoted by O'Curry).

divisions of this mass of materials—the books of pedigrees and genealogies, the martyrologies and festologies, such as the *Féliré of Angus the Culdee*, the topographical tracts, such as the *Dinnsenchas*—we touch "the most ancient traditions of the Irish, traditions which were committed to writing at a period when the ancient customs of the people were unbroken." We touch "the early history of Ireland, civil and ecclesiastical." We get "the origin and history of the countless monuments of Ireland, of the ruined church and tower, the sculptured cross, the holy well, and the commemorative name of almost every townland and parish in the whole island." We get, in short, "the most detailed information upon almost every part of ancient Gaelic life, a vast quantity of valuable details of life and manners."[1]

And then, besides, to our knowledge of the Celtic genius, Mr. Norris has brought us from Cornwall, M. de la Villemarqué from Brittany, contributions, insignificant indeed in quantity, if one compares them with the mass of the Irish materials extant, but far from insignificant in value.

We want to know what all this mass of documents really tells us about the Celt. But the mode of dealing with these documents, and with the whole question of Celtic antiquity, has hitherto been most unsatisfactory. Those who have dealt with them, have gone to work, in general, either as warm Celt-lovers or as warm Celt-haters, and not as disinterested students of an important matter of science. One party seems to set out with the determination to find everything in Celtism and its remains; the other, with the determination to find

[1] O'Curry.

nothing in them. A simple seeker for truth has a hard time between the two. An illustration or so will make clear what I mean. First let us take the Celt-lovers, who, though they engage one's sympathies more than the Celt-haters, yet, inasmuch as assertion is more dangerous than denial, show their weaknesses in a more signal way. A very learned man, the Rev. Edward Davies, published in the early part of this century two important books on Celtic antiquity. The second of these books, *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, contains, with much other interesting matter, the charming story of Taliesin. Bryant's book on mythology was then in vogue, and Bryant, in the fantastical manner so common in those days, found in Greek mythology what he called an arkite idolatry, pointing to Noah's deluge and the ark. Davies wishing to give dignity to his Celtic mythology, determines to find the arkite idolatry there too, and the style in which he proceeds to do this affords a good specimen of the extravagance which has caused Celtic antiquity to be looked upon with so much suspicion. The story of Taliesin begins thus,—

"In former times there was a man of noble descent in Penllyn. His name was Tegid Voel, and his paternal estate was in the middle of the Lake of Tegid, and his wife was called Ceridwen."

Nothing could well be simpler; but what Davies finds in this simple opening of Taliesin's story, is prodigious,—

"Let us take a brief view of the proprietor of this estate. Tegid Vohel—*bald serenity*—presents itself at once to our fancy. The painter would find no embarrassment in sketching the portrait of this sedate venerable personage, whose crown is partly

stripped of its hoary honours. But of all the gods of antiquity, none could with propriety sit for this picture excepting Saturn, the acknowledged representative of Noah, and the husband of Rhea, which was but another name for Ceres, the genius of the ark."

And Ceres, the genius of the ark, is of course found in Ceridwen, "the British Ceres, the arkite goddess who initiates us into the deepest mysteries of the arkite superstition."

Now the story of Taliesin, as it proceeds, exhibits Ceridwen as a sorceress; and a sorceress, like a goddess, belongs to the world of the supernatural; but, beyond this, the story itself does not suggest one particle of relationship between Ceridwen and Ceres. All the rest comes out of Davies's fancy, and is established by reasoning of the force of that about "bald serenity."

It is not difficult for the other side, the Celt-haters, to get a triumph over such adversaries as these. Perhaps I ought to ask pardon of Mr. Nash, whose *Taliesin* it is impossible to read without profit and instruction, for classing him among the Celt-haters; his determined scepticism about Welsh antiquity seems to me, however, to betray a preconceived hostility, a bias taken beforehand, as unmistakable as Mr. Davies's prepossessions. But Mr. Nash is often very happy in demolishing, for really the Celt-lovers seem often to try to lay themselves open, and to invite demolition. Full of his notions about an arkite idolatry and a Helio-dæmonic worship, Edward Davies gives this translation of an old Welsh poem, entitled *The Panegyric of Lludd the Great*,—

"A song of dark import was composed by the

distinguished Ogdoad, who assembled on the day of the moon, and went in open procession. On the day of Mars they allotted wrath to their adversaries; on the day of Mercury they enjoyed their full pomp; on the day of Jove they were delivered from the detested usurpers; on the day of Venus, the day of the great influx, they swam in the blood of men;[1] on the day of the Sun there truly assemble five ships and five hundred of those who make supplication: O Brithi, O Brithoi! O son of the compacted wood, the shock overtakes me; we all attend on Adonai, on the area of Pwmpai."

That looks Helio-dæmonic enough, undoubtedly; especially when Davies prints *O Brithi, O Brithoi!* in Hebrew characters, as being "vestiges of sacred hymns in the Phœnician language." But then comes Mr. Nash, and says that the poem is a middle-age composition, with nothing Helio-dæmonic about it; that it is meant to ridicule the monks; and that *O Brithi, O Brithoi!* is a mere piece of unintelligible jargon in mockery of the chants used by the monks at prayers; and he gives this counter-translation of the poem,—

"They make harsh songs; they note eight numbers. On Monday they will be prying about. On Tuesday they separate, angry with their adversaries. On Wednesday they drink, enjoying themselves ostentatiously. On Thursday they are in the choir; their poverty is disagreeable. Friday is a day of abundance, the men are swimming in pleasures. On Sunday, certainly, five legions and five hundreds of them, they pray, they make exclamations: O Brithi, Brithoi! Like wood-cuckoos in noise they

[1] Here, where Saturday should come, something is wanting in the manuscript.

will be, every one of the idiots banging on the ground."

As one reads Mr. Nash's explanation and translation after Edward Davies's, one feels that a flood of the broad daylight of common sense has been suddenly shed over the *Panegyric on Lludd the Great*, and one is very grateful to Mr. Nash.

Or, again, when another Celt-lover, Mr. Herbert, has bewildered us with his fancies, as uncritical as Edward Davies's; with his neo-Druidism, his Mithriac heresy, his Crist-celi, or man-god of the mysteries; and, above all, his ape of the sanctuary, "signifying the mercurial principle, that strange and unexplained disgrace of paganism," Mr. Nash comes to our assistance, and is most refreshingly rational. To confine ourselves to the ape of the sanctuary only. Mr. Herbert constructs his monster—to whom, he says, "great sanctity, together with foul crime, deception, and treachery," is ascribed—out of four lines of old Welsh poetry, of which he adopts the following translation,—

"Without the ape, without the stall of the cow, without the mundane rampart, the world will become desolate, not requiring the cuckoos to convene the appointed dance over the green."

One is not very clear what all this means, but it has, at any rate, a solemn air about it, which prepares one for the development of its first-named personage, the ape, into the mystical ape of the sanctuary. The cow, too—says another famous Celt-lover, Dr. Owen, the learned author of the *Welsh Dictionary*—the cow (*henfon*) is the cow of transmigration; and this also sounds natural enough. But Mr. Nash, who has a keen eye for the piecing which frequently happens in these old fragments, has observed that

just here, where the ape of the sanctuary and the cow of transmigration make their appearance, there seems to come a cluster of adages, popular sayings; and he at once remembers an adage preserved with the word *henfon* in it, where, as he justly says, "the cow of transmigration cannot very well have place." This adage, rendered literally in English, is: "Whoso owns the old cow, let him go at her tail;" and the meaning of it, as a popular saying, is clear and simple enough. With this clue, Mr. Nash examines the whole passage, suggests that *heb eppa*, "without the ape," with which Mr. Herbert begins, in truth belongs to something going before and is to be translated somewhat differently; and, in short, that what we really have here is simply these three adages one after another: "The first share is the full one. Politeness is natural, says the ape. Without the cow-stall there would be no dung-heap." And one can hardly doubt that Mr. Nash is quite right.

Even friends of the Celt, who are perfectly incapable of extravagances of this sort, fall too often into a loose mode of criticism concerning him and the documents of his history, which is unsatisfactory in itself, and also gives an advantage to his many enemies. One of the best and most delightful friends he has ever had—M. de la Villemarqué—has seen clearly enough that often the alleged antiquity of his documents cannot be proved, that it can be even disproved, and that he must rely on other supports than this to establish what he wants; yet one finds him saying: "I open the collection of Welsh bards from the sixth to the tenth century. Taliesin, one of the oldest of them," . . . and so on. But his adversaries deny that we have really any such thing as a "collection of Welsh bards from the

sixth to the tenth century," or that a "Taliesin, one of the oldest of them," exists to be quoted in defence of any thesis. Sharon Turner, again, whose *Vindication of the Ancient British Poems* was prompted, it seems to me, by a critical instinct at bottom sound, is weak and uncritical in details like this: "The strange poem of Taliesin, called the *Spoils of Annwn*, implies the existence (in the sixth century, he means) of mythological tales about Arthur; and the frequent allusion of the old Welsh bards to the persons and incidents which we find in the *Mabinogion*, are further proofs that there must have been such stories in circulation amongst the Welsh." But the critic has to show, against his adversaries, that the *Spoils of Annwn* is a real poem of the sixth century, with a real sixth-century poet called Taliesin for its author, before he can use it to prove what Sharon Turner there wishes to prove; and, in like manner, the high antiquity of persons and incidents that are found in the manuscripts of the *Mabinogion*—manuscripts written, like the famous *Red Book of Hergest*, in the library of Jesus College at Oxford, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—is not proved by allusions of the old Welsh bards, until (which is just the question at issue) the pieces containing these allusions are proved themselves to possess a very high antiquity. In the present state of the question as to the early Welsh literature, this sort of reasoning is inconclusive and bewildering, and merely carries us round in a circle. Again, it is worse than inconclusive reasoning, it shows so uncritical a spirit that it begets grave mistrust, when Mr. Williams ab Ithel, employed by the Master of the Rolls to edit the *Brut y Tywysogion*, the "Chronicle of the Princes," says in his introduction, in many respects so useful

and interesting: "We may add, on the authority of a scrupulously faithful antiquary, and one that was deeply versed in the traditions of his order—the late Iolo Morganwg—that King Arthur in his Institutes of the Round Table introduced the age of the world for events which occurred before Christ, and the year of Christ's nativity for all subsequent events." Now, putting out of the question Iolo Morganwg's character as an antiquary, it is obvious that no one, not Grimm himself, can stand in that way as "authority" for King Arthur's having thus regulated chronology by his Institutes of the Round Table, or even for there ever having been any such institutes at all. And finally, greatly as I respect and admire Mr. Eugene O'Curry, unquestionable as is the sagacity, the moderation, which he in general unites with his immense learning, I must say that he, too, like his brother Celt-lovers, sometimes lays himself dangerously open. For instance, the Royal Irish Academy possesses in its Museum a relic of the greatest value, the *Domhnach Airgid*, a Latin manuscript of the four gospels. The outer box containing this manuscript is of the fourteenth century, but the manuscript itself, says O'Curry (and no man is better able to judge) is certainly of the sixth. This is all very well. "But," O'Curry then goes on, "I believe no reasonable doubt can exist that the *Domhnach Airgid* was actually sanctified by the hand of our great Apostle." One has a thrill of excitement at receiving this assurance from such a man as Eugene O'Curry; one believes that he is really going to make it clear that St. Patrick did actually sanctify the *Domhnach Airgid* with his own hands; and one reads on,—

"As St. Patrick, says an ancient life of St. Mac

Carthainn preserved by Colgan in his *Acta Santorum Hiberniæ*, was on his way from the north, and coming to the place now called Clogher, he was carried over a stream by his strong man, Bishop Mac Carthainn, who, while bearing the Saint, groaned aloud, exclaiming, 'Ugh! Ugh!'

"'Upon my good word,' said the Saint, 'it was not usual with you to make that noise.'

"'I am now old and infirm,' said Bishop Mac Carthainn, 'and all my early companions in mission-work you have settled down in their respective churches, while I am still on my travels.'

"'Found a church then,' said the Saint, 'that shall not be too near us (that is to his own Church of Armagh) for familiarity, nor too far from us for intercourse.'

"And the Saint then left Bishop Mac Carthainn there, at Clogher, and bestowed the *Domhnach Airgid* upon him, which had been given to Patrick from heaven, when he was on the sea, coming to Erin."

The legend is full of poetry, full of humour; and one can quite appreciate, after reading it, the tact which gave St. Patrick such a prodigious success in organising the primitive church in Ireland; the new bishop, "not too near us for familiarity, nor too far from us for intercourse," is a masterpiece. But how can Eugene O'Curry have imagined that it takes no more than a legend like that to prove that the particular manuscript now in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy was once in St. Patrick's pocket?

I insist upon extravagances like these, not in order to throw ridicule upon the Celt-lovers—on the contrary, I feel a great deal of sympathy with them

--but rather, to make it clear what an immense advantage the Celt-haters, the negative side, have in the controversy about Celtic antiquity; how much a clear-headed sceptic, like Mr. Nash, may utterly demolish, and, in demolishing, give himself the appearance of having won an entire victory. But an entire victory he has, as I will next proceed to show, by no means won.

II

I SAID that a sceptic like Mr. Nash, by demolishing the rubbish of the Celtic antiquaries, might often give himself the appearance of having won a complete victory, but that a complete victory he had, in truth, by no means won. He has cleared much rubbish away, but this is no such very difficult feat, and requires mainly common sense; to be sure, Welsh archæologists are apt to lose their common sense, but at moments when they are in possession of it they can do the indispensable, negative part of criticism, not, indeed, so briskly or cleverly as Mr. Nash, but still well enough. Edward Davies, for instance, has quite clearly seen that the alleged remains of old Welsh literature are not to be taken for genuine just as they stand: "Some petty and mendicant minstrel, who only chaunted it as an old song, has tacked on" (he says of a poem he is discussing) "these lines, in a style and measure totally different from the preceding verses: 'May the Trinity grant us mercy in the day of judgment: a liberal donation, good gentlemen!'" There, fifty years before, Mr. Nash, is a clearance very like one of Mr. Nash's.

But the difficult feat in this matter is the feat of construction; to determine when one has cleared away all that is to be cleared away, what is the significance of that which is left; and here, I confess, I think Mr. Nash and his fellow-sceptics, who say that next to nothing is left, and that the significance of whatever is left is next to nothing, dissatisfy the genuine critic even more than Edward Davies and his brother enthusiasts, who have a sense that something primitive, august, and interesting is there, though they fail to extract it, dissatisfy him. There is a very edifying story told by O'Curry of the effect produced on Moore, the poet, who had undertaken to write the history of Ireland (a task for which he was quite unfit), by the contemplation of an old Irish manuscript. Moore had, without knowing anything about them, spoken slightingly of the value to the historian of Ireland of the materials afforded by such manuscripts; but, says O'Curry,—

"In the year 1839, during one of his last visits to the land of his birth, he, in company with his old and attached friend Dr. Petrie, favoured me with an unexpected visit at the Royal Irish Academy. I was at that period employed on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and at the time of his visit happened to have before me on my desk the *Books of Ballymote and Lecain*, *The Speckled Book*, *The Annals of the Four Masters*, and many other ancient books, for historical research and reference. I had never before seen Moore, and after a brief introduction and explanation of the nature of my occupation by Dr. Petrie, and seeing the formidable array of so many dark and time-worn volumes by which I was surrounded, he looked a little disconcerted, but after a

while plucked up courage to open the *Book of Ballymote* and ask what it was. Dr. Petrie and myself then entered into a short explanation of the history and character of the books then present as well as of ancient Gaedhelic documents in general. Moore listened with great attention, alternately scanning the books and myself, and then asked me, in a serious tone, if I understood them, and how I had learned to do so. Having satisfied him upon these points, he turned to Dr. Petrie and said: 'Petrie, these huge tomes could not have been written by fools or for any foolish purpose. I never knew anything about them before, and I had no right to have undertaken the *History of Ireland*.'"

And from that day Moore, it is said, lost all heart for going on with his *History of Ireland*, and it was only the importunity of the publishers which induced him to bring out the remaining volume.

Could not have been written by fools, or for any foolish purpose. That is, I am convinced, a true presentiment to have in one's mind when one looks at Irish documents like the *Book of Ballymote*, or Welsh documents like the *Red Book of Hergest*. In some respects, at any rate, these documents are what they claim to be, they hold what they pretend to hold, they touch that primitive world of which they profess to be the voice. The true critic is he who can detect this precious and genuine part in them, and employ it for the elucidation of the Celt's genius and history, and for any other fruitful purposes to which it can be applied. Merely to point out the mixture of what is late and spurious in them, is to touch but the fringes of the matter. In reliance upon the discovery of this mixture of what is late and spurious in them, to pooh-pooh them altogether, to

treat them as a heap of rubbish, a mass of middle-age forgeries, is to fall into the greatest possible error. Granted that all the manuscripts of Welsh poetry (to take that branch of Celtic literature which has had, in Mr. Nash, the ablest disparager), granted that all such manuscripts that we possess are, with the most insignificant exception, not older than the twelfth century; granted that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a time of great poetical activity in Wales, a time when a mediæval literature flourished there, as it flourished in England, France, and other countries; granted that a great deal of what Welsh enthusiasts have attributed to their great traditional poets of the sixth century belongs to this later epoch—what then? Does that get rid of the great traditional poets—the Cynveirdd or old bards, Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hen, and their compeers—does that get rid of the great poetical tradition of the sixth century altogether; does it merge the whole literary antiquity of Wales in her mediæval literary antiquity, or, at least, reduce all other than this to insignificance? Mr. Nash says it does; all his efforts are directed to show how much of the so-called sixth-century pieces may be resolved into mediæval, twelfth-century work; his grand thesis is that there is nothing primitive and pre-Christian in the extant Welsh literature, no traces of the Druidism and Paganism every one associates with Celtic antiquity; all this, he says, was extinguished by Paulinus in A.D. 59, and never resuscitated. "At the time the Mabinogion and the Taliesin ballads were composed, no tradition or popular recollection of the Druids or the Druidical mythology existed in Wales. The Welsh bards knew of no older mystery, nor of any mystic creed,

unknown to the rest of the Christian world." And Mr. Nash complains that "the old opinion that the Welsh poems contain notices of Druid or Pagan superstitions of a remote origin" should still find promulgators; what we find in them is only, he says, what was circulating in Wales in the twelfth century, and "one great mistake in these investigations has been the supposing that the Welsh of the twelfth, or even of the sixth century, were wiser as well as more Pagan than their neighbours."

Why, what a wonderful thing is this! We have, in the first place, the most weighty and explicit testimony—Strabo's, Cæsar's, Lucan's—that this race once possessed a special, profound, spiritual discipline, that they were, to use Mr. Nash's words, "wiser than their neighbours." Lucan's words are singularly clear and strong, and serve well to stand as a landmark in this controversy, in which one is sometimes embarrassed by hearing authorities quoted on this side or that, when one does not feel sure precisely what they say, how much or how little; Lucan, addressing those hitherto under the pressure of Rome, but now left by the Roman civil war to their own devices, says,—

"Ye too, ye bards, who by your praises perpetuate the memory of the fallen brave, without hindrance poured forth your strains. And ye, ye Druids, now that the sword was removed, began once more your barbaric rites and weird solemnities. To you only is given knowledge or ignorance (whichever it be) of the gods and the powers of heaven; your dwelling is in the lone heart of the forest. From you we learn, that the bourne of man's ghost is not the senseless grave, not the pale realm of the monarch below; in another world his spirit survives still;—

death, if your lore be true, is but the passage to enduring life."

There is the testimony of an educated Roman, fifty years after Christ, to the Celtic race being then "wiser than their neighbours;" testimony all the more remarkable because civilised nations, though very prone to ascribe to barbarous people an ideal purity and simplicity of life and manners, are by no means naturally inclined to ascribe to them high attainment in intellectual and spiritual things. And now, along with this testimony of Lucan's, one has to carry in mind Cæsar's remark, that the Druids, partly from a religious scruple, partly from a desire to discipline the memory of their pupils, committed nothing to writing. Well, then come the crushing defeat of the Celtic race in Britain and the Roman conquest; but the Celtic race subsisted here still, and any one can see that, while the race subsisted, the traditions of a discipline such as that of which Lucan has drawn the picture were not likely to be so very speedily "extinguished." The withdrawal of the Romans, the recovered independence of the native race here, the Saxon invasion, the struggle with the Saxons, were just the ground for one of those bursts of energetic national life and self-consciousness which find a voice in a burst of poets and poetry. Accordingly, to this time, to the sixth century, the universal Welsh tradition attaches the great group of British poets, Taliesin and his fellows. In the twelfth century there began for Wales, along with another burst of national life, another burst of poetry; and this burst *literary* in the stricter sense of the word—a burst which left, for the first time, written records. It wrote the records of its predecessors, as well as of itself, and therefore Mr. Nash wants to make it the

real author of the whole poetry, one may say, of the sixth century, as well as its own. No doubt one cannot produce the texts of the poetry of the sixth century; no doubt we have this only as the twelfth and succeeding centuries wrote it down; no doubt they mixed and changed it a great deal in writing it down. But, since a continuous stream of testimony shows the enduring existence and influence among the kindred Celts of Wales and Brittany, from the sixth century to the twelfth, of an old national literature, it seems certain that much of this must be traceable in the documents of the twelfth century, and the interesting thing is to trace it. It cannot be denied that there is such a continuous stream of testimony; there is Gildas in the sixth century, Nennius in the eighth, the laws of Howel in the tenth; in the eleventh, twenty or thirty years before the new literary epoch began, we hear of Rhys ap Tudor having "brought with him from Brittany the system of the Round Table, which at home had become quite forgotten, and he restored it as it is, with regard to minstrels and bards, as it had been at Caerleon-upon-Usk, under the Emperor Arthur, in the time of the sovereignty of the race of the Cymry over the island of Britain and its adjacent islands." Mr. Nash's own comment on this is: "We here see the introduction of the Arthurian romance from Brittany, preceding by nearly one generation the revival of music and poetry in North Wales;" and yet he does not seem to perceive what a testimony is here to the reality, fulness, and subsistence of that primitive literature about which he is so sceptical. Then in the twelfth century testimony to this primitive literature absolutely abounds; one can quote none better than that of Giraldus de Barri, or Giraldus

Cambrensis, as he is usually called. Giraldus is an excellent authority, who knew well what he was writing about, and he speaks of the Welsh bards and rhapsodists of his time as having in their possession "ancient and authentic books" in the Welsh language. The apparatus of technical terms of poetry, again, and the elaborate poetical organisation which we find, both in Wales and Ireland, existing from the very commencement of the mediæval literary period in each, and to which no other mediæval literature, so far as I know, shows at its first beginnings anything similar, indicates surely, in these Celtic peoples, the clear and persistent tradition of an older poetical period of great development, and almost irresistibly connects itself in one's mind with the elaborate Druidic discipline which Cæsar mentions.

But perhaps the best way to get a full sense of the storied antiquity, forming as it were the background to those mediæval documents which in Mr. Nash's eyes pretty much begin and end with themselves, is to take, almost at random, a passage from such a tale as *Kilhwch and Olwen*, in the *Mabinogion* —that charming collection, for which we owe such a debt of gratitude to Lady Charlotte Guest (to call her still by the name she bore when she made her happy entry into the world of letters), and which she so unkindly suffers to remain out of print. Almost every page of this tale points to traditions and personages of the most remote antiquity, and is instinct with the very breath of the primitive world. Search is made for Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from between his mother and the wall. The seekers go first to the Ousel of Cilgwri; the Ousel had lived long enough to peck a smith's anvil down to the size of a nut,

but he had never heard of Mabon. "But there is a race of animals who were formed before me, and I will be your guide to them." So the Ousel guides them to the Stag of Redynvre. The Stag has seen an oak sapling, in the wood where he lived, grow up to be an oak with a hundred branches, and then slowly decay down to a withered stump, yet he had never heard of Mabon. "But I will be your guide to the place where there is an animal which was formed before I was;" and he guides them to the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd. "When first I came hither," says the Owl, "the wide valley you see was a wooded glen. And a race of men came and rooted it up. And there grew a second wood; and this wood is the third. My wings, are they not withered stumps?" Yet the Owl, in spite of his great age, had never heard of Mabon; but he offered to be guide "to where is the oldest animal in the world, and the one that has travelled most, the Eagle of Gwern Abwy." The Eagle was so old, that a rock, from the top of which he pecked at the stars every evening, was now not so much as a span high. He knew nothing of Mabon; but there was a monster Salmon, into whom he once struck his claws in Llyn Llyw, who might, perhaps, tell them something of him. And at last the Salmon of Llyn Llyw told them of Mabon. "With every tide I go along the river upwards, until I come near to the walls of Gloucester, and there have I found such wrong as I never found elsewhere." And the Salmon took Arthur's messengers on his shoulders up to the wall of the prison in Gloucester, and they delivered Mabon.

Nothing could better give that sense of primitive and pre-mediæval antiquity which to the observer with any tact for these things is, I think, clearly

perceptible in these remains, at whatever time they may have been written; or better serve to check too absolute an acceptance of Mr. Nash's doctrine—in some respects very salutary—" that the common assumption of such remains of the date of the sixth century has been made upon very unsatisfactory grounds." It is true, it has; it is true, too, that, as he goes on to say, " writers who claim for productions actually existing only in manuscripts of the twelfth, an origin in the sixth century, are called upon to demonstrate the links of evidence, either internal or external, which bridge over this great intervening period of at least five hundred years." Then Mr. Nash continues: " This external evidence is altogether wanting." Not altogether, as we have seen; that assertion is a little too strong. But I am content to let it pass, because it is true, that without internal evidence in this matter the external evidence would be of no moment. But when Mr. Nash continues further: " And the internal evidence even of the so-called historic poems themselves, is, in some instances at least, opposed to their claims to an origin in the sixth century," and leaves the matter there, and finishes his chapter, I say that is an unsatisfactory turn to give to the matter, and a lame and impotent conclusion to his chapter; because the one interesting, fruitful question here is, not in what instances the internal evidence opposes the claims of these poems to a sixth-century origin, but in what instances it supports them, and what these sixth-century remains, thus established, signify.

So again with the question as to the mythological import of these poems. Mr. Nash seems to me to have dealt with this, too, rather in the spirit of a sturdy enemy of the Celts and their pretensions—

often enough chimerical—than in the spirit of a disinterested man of science. "We find in the oldest compositions in the Welsh language no traces," he says, "of the Druids, or of a pagan mythology." He will not hear of there being, for instance, in these compositions, traces of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, attributed to the Druids in such clear words by Cæsar. He is very severe upon a German scholar, long and favourably known in this country, who has already furnished several contributions to our knowledge of the Celtic race, and of whose labours the main fruit has, I believe, not yet been given us—Mr. Meyer. He is very severe upon Mr. Meyer for finding in one of the poems ascribed to Taliesin, "a sacrificial hymn addressed to the god Pryd, in his character of god of the Sun." It is not for me to pronounce for or against this notion of Mr. Meyer's. I have not the knowledge which is needed in order to make one's suffrage in these matters of any value; speaking merely as one of the unlearned public, I will confess that allegory seems to me to play, in Mr. Meyer's theories, a somewhat excessive part; Arthur and his Twelve (?) Knights of the Round Table signifying solely the year with its twelve months; Percival and the Miller signifying solely steel and the grindstone; Stonehenge and the *Gododin* put to purely calendarial purposes; the *Nibelungen*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Iliad*, finally following the fate of the *Gododin;* all this appears to me, I will confess, a little prematurely grasped, a little unsubstantial. But that any one who knows the set of modern mythological science towards astronomical and solar myths, a set which has already justified itself in many respects so victoriously, and which is so irre-

sistible that one can hardly now look up at the sun without having the sensations of a moth; that any one who knows this, should find in the Welsh remains no traces of mythology, is quite astounding. Why, the heroes and heroines of the old Cymric world are all in the sky as well as in Welsh story; Arthur is the Great Bear, his harp is the constellation Lyra; Cassiopeia's chair is Llys Don, Don's Court; the daughter of Don was Arianrod, and the Northern Crown is Caer Arianrod; Gwydion was Don's son, and the Milky Way is Caer Gwydion. With Gwydion is Math, the son of Mathonwy, the "man of illusion and phantasy;" and the moment one goes below the surface—almost before one goes below the surface—all is illusion and phantasy, double-meaning, and far-reaching mythological import, in the world which all these personages inhabit. What are the three hundred ravens of Owen, and the nine sorceresses of Peredur, and the dogs of Annwn the Welsh Hades, and the birds of Rhiannon, whose song was so sweet that warriors remained spell-bound for eighty years together listening to them? What is the Avanc, the water-monster, of whom every lake-side in Wales, and her proverbial speech, and her music, to this day preserve the tradition? What is Gwyn the son of Nudd, king of fairie, the ruler of the Tylwyth Teg, or family of beauty, who till the day of doom fights on every first day of May—the great feast of the sun among the Celtic peoples—with Gwythyr, for the fair Cordelia, the daughter of Lear? What is the wonderful mare of Teirnyon, which on the night of every first of May foaled, and no one ever knew what became of the colt? Who is the mystic Arawn, the king of Annwn, who changed semblance for a year with

Pwyll, prince of Dyved, and reigned in his place? These are no mediæval personages; they belong to an older, pagan, mythological world. The very first thing that strikes one, in reading the *Mabinogion*, is how evidently the mediæval story-teller is pillaging an antiquity of which he does not fully possess the secret; he is like a peasant building his hut on the site of Halicarnassus or Ephesus; he builds, but what he builds is full of materials of which he knows not the history, or knows by a glimmering tradition merely—stones "not of this building," but of an older architecture, greater, cunninger, more majestical. In the mediæval stories of no Latin or Teutonic people does this strike one as in those of the Welsh. Kilhwch, in the story, already quoted, of *Kilhwch and Olwen*, asks help at the hand of Arthur's warriors; a list of these warriors is given, which fills I know not how many pages of Lady Charlotte Guest's book; this list is a perfect treasure-house of mysterious ruins,—

"Teithi Hen, the son of Gwynham—(his domains were swallowed up by the sea, and he himself hardly escaped, and he came to Arthur, and his knife had this peculiarity, that from the time that he came there no haft would ever remain upon it, and owing to this a sickness came over him, and he pined away during the remainder of his life, and of this he died).

"Drem, the son of Dremidyd—(when the gnat arose in the morning with the sun, Drem could see it from Gelli Wic in Cornwall, as far off as Pen Blathaon in North Britain).

"Kynyr Keinvarvawc—(when he was told he had a son born, he said to his wife: Damsel, if thy son be mine, his heart will be always cold, and there will be no warmth in his hands)."

How evident, again, is the slightness of the narrator's hold upon the Twrch-Trwyth and his strange story! How manifest the mixture of known and unknown, shadowy and clear, of different layers and orders of tradition jumbled together, in the story of Bran the Blessed, a story whose personages touch a comparatively late and historic time. Bran invades Ireland, to avenge one of "the three unhappy blows of this island," the daily striking of Branwen by her husband Matholwch, King of Ireland. Bran is mortally wounded by a poisoned dart, and only seven men of Britain, "the Island of the Mighty," escape, among them Taliesin,—

"And Bran commanded them that they should cut off his head. And take you my head, said he, and bear it even unto the White Mount in London, and bury it there with the face towards France. And a long time will you be upon the road. In Harlech you will be feasting seven years, the birds of Rhiannon singing unto you the while. And all that time the head will be to you as pleasant company as it ever was when on my body. And at Gwales in Penvro you will be fourscore years, and you may remain there, and the head with you uncorrupted, until you open the door that looks towards Aber Henvelen and towards Cornwall. And after you have opened that door, there you may no longer tarry; set forth then to London to bury the head, and go straight forward.

"So they cut off his head, and those seven went forward therewith. And Branwen was the eighth with them, and they came to land at Aber Alaw in Anglesey, and they sate down to rest. And Branwen looked towards Ireland and towards the Island of the Mighty, to see if she could descry them. 'Alas,'

said she, 'woe is me that I was ever born; two islands have been destroyed because of me.' Then she uttered a loud groan, and there broke her heart. And they made her a four-sided grave, and buried her upon the banks of the Alaw.

"Then they went to Harlech, and sate down to feast and to drink there; and there came three birds and began singing, and all the songs they had ever heard were harsh compared thereto; and at this feast they continued seven years. Then they went to Gwales in Penvro, and there they found a fair and regal spot overlooking the ocean, and a spacious hall was therein. And they went into the hall, and two of its doors were open, but the third door was closed, that which looked towards Cornwall. 'See yonder,' said Manawyddan, 'is the door that we may not open.' And that night they regaled themselves and were joyful. And there they remained fourscore years, nor did they think they had ever spent a time more joyous and mirthful. And they were not more weary than when first they came, neither did they, any of them, know the time they had been there. And it was as pleasant to them having the head with them as if Bran had been with them himself.

"But one day said Heilyn, the son of Gwyn: 'Evil betide me if I do not open the door to know if that is true which is said concerning it.' So he opened the door and looked towards Cornwall and Aber Henvelen. And when they had looked, they were as conscious of all the evils they had ever sustained, and of all the friends and companions they had lost, and of all the misery that had befallen them, as if all had happened in that very spot; and especially of the fate of their lord. And because of

their perturbation they could not rest, but journeyed forth with the head towards London. And they buried the head in the White Mount."

Arthur afterwards, in his pride and self-confidence, disinterred the head, and this was one of "the three unhappy disclosures of the island of Britain."

There is evidently mixed here, with the newer legend, a *detritus*, as the geologists would say, of something far older; and the secret of Wales and its genius is not truly reached until this *detritus*, instead of being called recent because it is found in contact with what is recent, is disengaged, and is made to tell its own story.

But when we show him things of this kind in the Welsh remains, Mr. Nash has an answer for us. "Oh," he says, "all this is merely a machinery of necromancers and magic, such as has probably been possessed by all people in all ages, more or less abundantly. How similar are the creations of the human mind in times and places the most remote! We see in this similarity only an evidence of the existence of a common stock of ideas, variously developed according to the formative pressure of external circumstances. The materials of these tales are not peculiar to the Welsh." And then Mr. Nash points out, with much learning and ingenuity, how certain incidents of these tales have their counterparts in Irish, in Scandinavian, in Oriental romance. He says, fairly enough, that the assertions of Taliesin, in the famous *Hanes Taliesin*, or *History of Taliesin*, that he was present with Noah in the Ark, at the Tower of Babel, and with Alexander of Macedon, "we may ascribe to the poetic fancy of the Christian priest of the thirteenth century, who brought this romance into its present form.

We may compare these statements of the universal presence of the wonder-working magician with those of the gleeman who recites the Anglo-Saxon metrical tale called the *Traveller's Song.*" No doubt, lands the most distant can be shown to have a common property in many marvellous stories. This is one of the most interesting discoveries of modern science; but modern science is equally interested in knowing how the genius of each people has differentiated, so to speak, this common property of theirs; in tracking out, in each case, that special " variety of development," which, to use Mr. Nash's own words, " the formative pressure of external circumstances " has occasioned; and not the formative pressure from without only, but also the formative pressure from within. It is this which he who deals with the Welsh remains in a philosophic spirit wants to know. Where is the force, for scientific purposes, of telling us that certain incidents by which Welsh poetry has been supposed to indicate a surviving tradition of the doctrine of transmigration, are found in Irish poetry also, when Irish poetry has, like Welsh, its roots in that Celtism which is said to have held this doctrine of transmigration so strongly? Where is even the great force, for scientific purposes, of proving, if it were possible to prove, that the extant remains of Welsh poetry contain not one plain declaration of Druidical, Pagan, pre-Christian doctrine, if one has in the extant remains of Breton poetry such texts as this from the prophecy of Gwenchlan: " Three times must we all die, before we come to our final repose? " or as the cry of the eagles, in the same poem, of fierce thirst for Christian blood, a cry in which the poet evidently gives vent to his own hatred? since the solidarity, to use that

convenient French word, of Breton and Welsh poetry is so complete, that the ideas of the one may be almost certainly assumed not to have been wanting to those of the other. The question is, when Taliesin says, in the *Battle of the Trees:* "I have been in many shapes before I attained a congenial form. I have been a narrow blade of a sword, I have been a drop in the air, I have been a shining star, I have been a word in a book, I have been a book in the beginning, I have been a light in a lantern a year and a half, I have been a bridge for passing over three-score rivers; I have journeyed as an eagle, I have been a boat on the sea, I have been a director in battle, I have been a sword in the hand, I have been a shield in fight, I have been the string of a harp, I have been enchanted for a year in the foam of water. There is nothing in which I have not been"—the question is, have these "statements of the universal presence of the wonder-working magician" nothing which distinguishes them from "similar creations of the human mind in times and places the most remote;" have they not an inwardness, a severity of form, a solemnity of tone, which indicates the still reverberating echo of a profound doctrine and discipline, such as was Druidism? Suppose we compare Taliesin, as Mr. Nash invites us, with the gleeman of the Anglo-Saxon *Traveller's Song*. Take the specimen of this song which Mr. Nash himself quotes: "I have been with the Israelites and with the Essyringi, with the Hebrews and with the Indians and with the Egyptians; I have been with the Medes and with the Persians and with the Myrgings." It is very well to parallel with this extract Taliesin's: "I carried the banner before Alexander; I was in Canaan when Absalom

was slain; I was on the horse's crupper of Elias and Enoch; I was on the high cross of the merciful Son of God; I was the chief overseer at the building of the tower of Nimrod; I was with my King in the manger of the ass; I supported Moses through the waters of Jordan; I have been in the buttery in the land of the Trinity; it is not known what is the nature of its meat and its fish." It is very well to say that these assertions "we may fairly ascribe to the poetic fancy of a Christian priest of the thirteenth century." Certainly we may; the last of Taliesin's assertions more especially; though one must remark at the same time that the Welshman shows much more fire and imagination than the Anglo-Saxon. But Taliesin adds, after his: "I was in Canaan when Absalom was slain," "*I was in the hall of Don before Gwydion was born;*" he adds, after: "I was chief overseer at the building of the tower of Nimrod," "*I have been three times resident in the castle of Arianrod;*" he adds, after: "I was at the cross with Mary Magdalene," "*I obtained my inspiration from the cauldron of Ceridwen.*" And finally, after the mediæval touch of the visit to the buttery in the land of the Trinity, he goes off at score: "I have been instructed in the whole system of the universe; I shall be till the day of judgment on the face of the earth. I have been in an uneasy chair above Caer Sidin, and the whirling round without motion between three elements. Is it not the wonder of the world that cannot be discovered?" And so he ends the poem. But here is the Celtic, the essential part of the poem: it is here that the "formative pressure" has been really in operation; and here surely is paganism and mythology enough, which the Christian priest of the thirteenth century can have had nothing

to do with. It is unscientific, no doubt, to interpret this part as Edward Davies and Mr. Herbert do; but it is unscientific also to get rid of it as Mr. Nash does. Wales and the Welsh genius are not to be known without this part; and the true critic is he who can best disengage its real significance.

I say, then, what we want is to *know* the Celt and his genius; not to exalt him or to abase him, but to know him. And for this a disinterested, positive, and constructive criticism is needed. Neither his friends nor his enemies have yet given us much of this. His friends have given us materials for criticism, and for these we ought to be grateful; his enemies have given us negative criticism, and for this, too, up to a certain point, we may be grateful; but the criticism we really want neither of them has yet given us.

Philology, however, that science which in our time has had so many successes, has not been abandoned by her good fortune in touching the Celt; philology has brought, almost for the first time in their lives, the Celt and sound criticism together. The Celtic grammar of Zeuss, whose death is so grievous a loss to science, offers a splendid specimen of that patient, disinterested way of treating objects of knowledge, which is the best and most attractive characteristic of Germany. Zeuss proceeds neither as a Celt-lover nor as a Celt-hater; not the slightest trace of a wish to glorify Teutonism or to abase Celtism appears in his book. The only desire apparent there is the desire to know his object, the language of the Celtic peoples, as it really is. In this he stands as a model to Celtic students; and it has been given to him, as a reward for his sound method, to establish certain points which are henceforth cardinal points, land-

marks, in all the discussion of Celtic matters, and which no one had so established before. People talked at random of Celtic writings of this or that age; Zeuss has definitely fixed the age of what we actually have of these writings. To take the Cymric group of languages: our earliest Cornish document is a vocabulary of the thirteenth century; our earliest Breton document is a short description of an estate in a deed of the ninth century; our earliest Welsh documents are Welsh glosses of the eighth century to Eutychus, the grammarian, and Ovid's *Art of Love*, and the verses found by Edward Lhuyd in the *Juvencus* manuscript at Cambridge. The mention of this *Juvencus* fragment, by the by, suggests the difference there is between an interested and a disinterested critical habit. Mr. Nash deals with this fragment; but, in spite of all his great acuteness and learning, because he has a bias, because he does not bring to these matters the disinterested spirit they need, he is capable of getting rid, quite unwarrantably, of a particular word in the fragment which does not suit him; his dealing with the verses is an advocate's dealing, not a critic's. Of this sort of thing Zeuss is incapable.

The test which Zeuss used for establishing the age of these documents is a scientific test, the test of orthography and of declensional and syntactical forms. These matters are far out of my province, but what is clear, sound, and simple, has a natural attraction for us all, and one feels a pleasure in repeating it. It is the grand sign of age, Zeuss says, in Welsh and Irish words, when what the grammarians call the "*destitutio tenuium*" has not yet taken place; when the sharp consonants have not yet been changed into flat, *p* or *t* into *b* or *d*;

when, for instance, *map*, a son, has not yet become *mab ; coet*, a wood, *coed ; ocet*, a harrow, *oged*. This is a clear, scientific test to apply, and a test of which the accuracy can be verified; I do not say that Zeuss was the first person who knew this test or applied it, but I say that he is the first person who, in dealing with Celtic matters, has invariably proceeded by means of this and similar scientific tests; the first person, therefore, the body of whose work has a scientific, stable character; and so he stands as a model to all Celtic inquirers.

His influence has already been most happy; and as I have enlarged on a certain failure in criticism of Eugene O'Curry's,—whose business, after all, was the description and classification of materials rather than criticism—let me show, by another example from Eugene O'Curry, this good influence of Zeuss upon Celtic studies. Eugene O'Curry wants to establish that compositions of an older date than the twelfth century existed in Ireland in the twelfth century, and thus he proceeds. He takes one of the great extant Irish manuscripts, the *Leabhar na h'Uidhre ;* or, *Book of the Dun Cow*. The compiler of this book was, he says, a certain Maelmuiri, a member of the religious house of Cluainmacnois. This he establishes from a passage in the manuscript itself: "This is a trial of his pen here, by Maelmuiri, son of the son of Conn na m'Bocht." The date of Maelmuiri he establishes from a passage in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, under the year 1106: "Maelmuiri, son of the son of Conn na m'Bocht, was killed in the middle of the great stone church of Cluainmacnois, by a party of robbers." Thus he gets the date of the *Book of the Dun Cow*. This book contains an elegy on the death of St.

Columb. Now, even before 1106, the language of this elegy was so old as to require a gloss to make it intelligible, for it is accompanied by a gloss written between the lines. This gloss quotes, for the explanation of obsolete words, a number of more ancient compositions; and these compositions, therefore, must, at the beginning of the twelfth century, have been still in existence. Nothing can be sounder; every step is proved, and fairly proved, as one goes along. O'Curry thus affords a good specimen of the sane mode of proceeding so much wanted in Celtic researches, and so little practised by Edward Davies and his brethren; and to found this sane method, Zeuss, by the example he sets in his own department of philology, has mainly contributed.

Science's reconciling power, too, on which I have already touched, philology, in her Celtic researches, again and again illustrates. Races and languages have been absurdly joined, and unity has been often rashly assumed at stages where one was far, very far, from having yet really reached unity. Science has and will long have to be a divider and a sepa. ıtist, breaking arbitrary and fanciful connections, and dissipating dreams of a premature and impossible unity. Still, science—true science—recognises in the bottom of her soul a law of ultimate fusion, of conciliation. To reach this, but to reach it legitimately, she tends. She draws, for instance, towards the same idea which fills her elder and diviner sister, poetry—the idea of the substantial unity of man; though she draws towards it by roads of her own. But continually she is showing us affinity where we imagined there was isolation. What school-boy of us has not rummaged his Greek dictionary in vain for a satisfactory account of that old name for the Pelopon-

nese, the *Apian Land?* and within the limits of Greek itself there is none. But the Scythian name for earth, "apia," *watery, watery-issued*, meaning first *isle* and then *land*—this name, which we find in "avia," Scandin*avia*, and in "ey" for Alderne*y*, not only explains the *Apian Land* of Sophocles for us, but points the way to a whole world of relationships of which we knew nothing. The Scythians themselves again—obscure, far-separated Mongolian people as they used to appear to us—when we find that they are essentially Teutonic and Indo-European, their very name the same word as the common Latin word "scutum," the *shielded* people, what a surprise they give us! And then, before we have recovered from this surprise we learn that the name of their father and god, Targitavus, carries us I know not how much further into familiar company. This divinity, *Shining with the targe*, the Greek Hercules, the Sun, contains in the second half of his name, *tavus*, "shining," a wonderful cement to hold times and nations together. *Tavus*, "shining," from "ta a"—in Sanscrit, as well as Scythian, "to burn" or "shine"—is *Divus*, *dies*, *Zeus*, Θεός, *Dêva*, and I know not how much more; and *Taviti*, the bright and burnt, fire, the place of fire, the hearth, the centre of the family, becomes the family itself, just as our word family, the Latin *familia*, is from *thymelé*, the sacred centre of fire. The hearth comes to mean home. Then from home it comes to mean the group of homes, the tribe; from the tribe the entire nation; and in this sense of nation or people, the word appears in Gothic, Norse, Celtic, and Persian, as well as in Scythian; the *Theuthisks*, Deutschen, Tudesques, are the men of one *theuth*, nation, or people; and of this our name *Germans*

itself is, perhaps, only the Roman translation, meaning the men of one germ or stock. The Celtic divinity, Teutates, has his name from the Celtic *teuta*, people; *taviti*, fire, appearing here in its secondary and derived sense of *people*, just as it does in its own Scythian language in Targitavus's second name, *Tavit-varus*, *Teutaros*, the protector of the people. Another Celtic divinity, the Hesus of Lucan, finds his brother in the Gaisos, the sword, symbolising the god of battles of the Teutonic Scythians.[1] And after philology has thus related

[1] See *Les Scythes les Ancêtres des Peuples Germaniques et Slaves*, par F. G. Bergmann, professeur à la faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg: Colmar, 1858. But Professor Bergmann's etymologies are often, says Lord Strangford, "false lights, held by an uncertain hand." And Lord Strangford continues:—"The Apian land certainly meant the watery land, *Meer-umschlungen*, among the pre-Hellenic Greeks, just as the same land is called Morea by the modern post-Hellenic or Romaic Greeks from *more*, the name for the sea in the Slavonic vernacular of its inhabitants during the heart of the middle ages. But it is only connected by a remote and secondary affinity, if connected at all, with the *avia* of Scandinavia, assuming that to be the true German word for *water*, which, if it had come down to us in Gothic, would have been *avi*, genitive *aujôs*, and not a mere Latinised termination. Scythian is surely a negative rather than a positive term, much like our *Indian*, or the *Turanian* of modern ethnologists, used to comprehend nomads and barbarians of all sorts and races north and east of the Black and Caspian seas. It is unsafe to connect their name with anything as yet; it is quite as likely that it refers to the bow and arrow as to the shield, and is connected with our word to *shoot*, *sceôtan*, *skiutan*, Lithuanian *szau-ti*. Some of the Scythian peoples may have been Anarian, Allophylic, Mongolian; some were demonstrably Aryan, and not only that, but Iranian as well, as is best shown in a memoir read before the Berlin Academy this last year; the evidence having been first indicated in the rough by Schaffarik the Slavonic antiquary. Coins, glosses, proper names, and inscriptions prove it. Targitaos (not -tavus) and the rest is guess-work or wrong. Herodotus's Ταβιτι for the goddess Vesta is not connected with the root *div* whence Dêvas, Deus, etc., but the root *tap*, in Latin *tep*

to each other the Celt and the Teuton, she takes another branch of the Indo-European family, the Sclaves, and shows us them as having the same name with the German Suevi, the *solar* people; the common ground here, too, being that grand point of union, the sun, fire. So, also, we find Mr. Meyer, whose Celtic studies I just now mentioned, harping again and again on the connection even in Europe, if you go back far enough, between Celt and German. So, after all we have heard, and truly heard, of the diversity between all things Semitic and all things Indo-European, there is now an Italian philologist at work upon the relationship between Sanscrit and Hebrew.

Both in small and great things, philology, dealing with Celtic matters, has exemplified this tending of

(of tepere, tepefacere), Slavonic *tepl*, *topl* (for *tep* or *top*), in modern Persian *tâb*. *Thymele* refers to the hearth as the place of smoke (*θύω*, *thus*, *fumus*), but *familia* denotes household from *famulus* for *fagmulus*, the root *fag* being equated with the Sansk. *bhaj*, *servira*. Lucan's Hesus or Esus may fairly be compared with the Welsh *Hu* Gadarn by legitimate process, but no letter-change can justify his connection with *Gaisos*, the spear, not the sword, Virgil's *gæsum*, A. S. *gâr*, our verb to *gore*, retained in its outer form in *gar*-fish. For *Theuthisks*, *lege Thiudisks*, from *thiuda*, *populus*; in old high German Diutisk, Diotisk, *popularis*, *vulgaris*, the country vernacular as distinguished from the cultivated Latin; hence the word *Dutch*, *Deutsch*. With our ancestors *theód* stood for nation generally and *getheóde* for any speech. Our *diet* in the political sense is the same word, but borrowed from our German cousins, not inherited from our fathers. The modern Celtic form is the Irish *tuath*, in ancient Celtic it must have been *teuta*, *touta*, of which we actually have the adjective *toutius* in the Gaulish inscription of Nismes. In Oscan we have it as *turta*, *tuta*, its adjective being handed down in Livy's *meddix tuticus*, the mayor or chief magistrate of the *tuta*. In the Umbrian inscriptions it is *tota*. In Lithuanian *tauta*, the country opposed to the town, and in old Prussian *tauta*, the country generally, *en Prusiskan tautan*, *im Land zu Preussen*."

science towards unity. Who has not been puzzled by the relations of the Scots with Ireland—that *vetus et major Scotia*, as Colgan calls it? Who does not feel what pleasure Zeuss brings us when he suggests that *Gael*, the name for the Irish Celt, and *Scot*, are at bottom the same word, both having their origin in a word meaning *wind*, and both signifying *the violent stormy people?*[1] Who does not feel his mind agreeably cleared about our friends the Fenians, when he learns that the root of their name, *fen*, "white," appears in the hero Fingal; in Gwynned, the Welsh name for North Wales; in the Roman Venedotia; in Vannes in Brittany; in Venice? The very name of Ireland, some say, comes from the famous Sanscrit word *Arya*, the land of the Aryans, or noble men; although the weight of opinion seems to be in favour of connecting it rather with another Sanscrit word, *avara*, occidental, the western land or isle of the west.[2] But, at any rate, who that has been brought up to think the Celts utter aliens from us and our culture, can come without a start of sympathy upon such words as *heol* (sol), or *buaist* (fuisti)? or upon such a sentence as this, "*Peris Duw dui funnaun*" ("God prepared two fountains")? Or when Mr. Whitley Stokes, one of the very ablest scholars formed in

[1] Lord Strangford observes here:—"The original forms of Gael should be mentioned—Gaedil, Goidil: in modern Gaelic orthography Gaoidheal where the *dh* is not realised in pronunciation. There is nothing impossible in the connection of the root of this with that of Scot, *if* the *s* of the latter be merely prosthetic. But the whole thing is *in nubibus*, and given as a guess only."

[2] "The name of Erin," says Lord Strangford, "is treated at length in a masterly note by Whitley Stokes in the 1st series of Max Müller's lectures (4th ed.), p. 255, where its earliest *tangible* form is shown to have been Iverio. Pictet's connection with Arya is quite baseless."

Zeuss's school, a born philologist—he now occupies, alas! a post under the Government of India, instead of a chair of philology at home, and makes one think mournfully of Montesquieu's saying, that had he been an Englishman he should never have produced his great work, but have caught the contagion of practical life, and devoted himself to what is called "rising in the world,"—when Mr. Whitley Stokes, in his edition of *Cormac's Glossary*, holds up the Irish word *traith*, the sea, and makes us remark that, though the names *Triton*, *Amphitrite*, and those of corresponding Indian and Zend divinities, point to the meaning *sea*, yet it is only Irish which actually supplies the vocable, how delightfully that brings Ireland into the Indo-European concert! What a wholesome buffet it gives to Lord Lyndhurst's alienation doctrines!

To go a little further. Of the two great Celtic divisions of language, the Gaelic and the Cymric, the Gaelic, say the philologists, is more related to the younger, more synthetic, group of languages, Sanscrit, Greek, Zend, Latin, and Teutonic; the Cymric to the older, more analytic Turanian group. Of the more synthetic Aryan group, again, Zend and Teutonic are, in their turn, looser and more analytic than Sanscrit and Greek, more in sympathy with the Turanian group and with Celtic. What possibilities of affinity and influence are here hinted at; what lines of inquiry, worth exploring, at any rate, suggest themselves to one's mind. By the forms of its language a nation expresses its very self. Our language is the loosest, the most analytic, of all European languages. And we, then, what are we? what is England? I will not answer, A vast obscure Cymric basis with a vast visible Teutonic

superstructure; but I will say that that answer sometimes suggests itself, at any rate, sometimes knocks at our mind's door for admission; and we begin to cast about and see whether it is to be let in.

But the forms of its language are not our only key to a people; what it says in its language, its literature, is the great key, and we must get back to literature. The literature of the Celtic peoples has not yet had its Zeuss, and greatly it wants him. We need a Zeuss to apply to Celtic literature, to all its vexed questions of dates, authenticity, and significance, the criticism, the sane method, the disinterested endeavour to get at the real facts, which Zeuss has shown in dealing with Celtic language. Science is good in itself, and therefore Celtic literature —the Celt-haters having failed to prove it a bubble —Celtic literature is interesting, merely as an object of knowledge. But it reinforces and redoubles our interest in Celtic literature if we find that here, too, science exercises the reconciling, the uniting influence of which I have said so much; if we find here, more than anywhere else, traces of kinship, and the most essential sort of kinship, spiritual kinship, between us and the Celt, of which we had never dreamed. I settle nothing, and can settle nothing; I have not the special knowledge needed for that. I have no pretension to do more than to try and awaken interest; to seize on hints, to point out indications, which, to any one with a feeling for literature, suggest themselves; to stimulate other inquirers. I must surely be without the bias which has so often rendered Welsh and Irish students extravagant; why, my very name expresses that peculiar Semitico-Saxon mixture which makes the typical Englishman;

I can have no ends to serve in finding in Celtic literature more than is there. What *is* there, is for me the only question.

III

We have seen how philology carries us towards ideas of affinity of race which are new to us. But it is evident that this affinity, even if proved, can be no very potent affair, unless it goes beyond the stage at which we have hitherto observed it. Affinity between races still, so to speak, in their mother's womb, counts for something, indeed, but cannot count for very much. So long as Celt and Teuton are in their embryo rudimentary state, or, at least, no such great while out of their cradle, still engaged in their wanderings, changes of place, and struggle for development, so long as they have not yet crystallised into solid nations, they may touch and mix in passing, and yet very little come of it. It is when the embryo has grown and solidified into a distinct nation, into the Gaul or German of history, when it has finally acquired the characters which make the Gaul of history what he is, the German of history what he is, that contact and mixture are important, and may leave a long train of effects; for Celt and Teuton by this time have their formed, marked, national, ineffaceable qualities to oppose or to communicate. The contact of the German of the Continent with the Celt was in the pre-historic times, and the definite German type, as we know it, was fixed later, and from the time when it became fixed was not influenced by the Celtic type. But here in

our country, in historic times, long after the Celtic embryo had crystallised into the Celt proper, long after the Germanic embryo had crystallised into the German proper, there was an important contact between the two peoples; the Saxons invaded the Britons and settled themselves in the Britons' country. Well, then, here was a contact which one might expect would leave its traces; if the Saxons got the upper hand, as we all know they did, and made our country be England, and us be English, there must yet, one would think, be some trace of the Saxon having met the Briton; there must be some Celtic vein or other running through us. Many people say there is nothing at all of the kind, absolutely nothing; the *Saturday Review* treats these matters of ethnology with great power and learning, and the *Saturday Review* says we are "a nation into which a Norman element, like a much smaller Celtic element, was so completely absorbed that it is vain to seek after Norman or Celtic elements in any modern Englishman." And the other day at Zurich I read a long essay on English literature by one of the professors there, in which the writer observed, as a remarkable thing, that while other countries conquered by the Germans—France, for instance, and Italy—had ousted all German influence from their genius and literature, there were two countries, not originally Germanic, but conquered by the Germans, England and German Switzerland, of which the genius and the literature were purely and unmixedly German; and this he laid down as a position which nobody would dream of challenging.

I say it is strange that this should be so, and we in particular have reason for inquiring whether it really is so; because though, as I have said, even as

a matter of science the Celt has a claim to be known, and we have an interest in knowing him, yet this interest is wonderfully enhanced if we find him to have actually a part in us. The question is to be tried by external and by internal evidence; the language and the physical type of our race afford certain data for trying it, and other data are afforded by our literature, genius, and spiritual production generally. Data of this second kind belong to the province of the literary critic; data of the first kind to the province of the philologist and of the physiologist.

The province of the philologist and of the physiologist is not mine; but this whole question as to the mixture of Celt with Saxon in us has been so little explored, people have been so prone to settle it off-hand according to their prepossessions, that even on the philological and physiological side of it I must say a few words in passing. Surely it must strike with surprise any one who thinks of it, to find that without any immense inpouring of a whole people, that by mere expeditions of invaders having to come over the sea, and in no greater numbers than the Saxons, so far as we can make out, actually came, the old occupants of this island, the Celtic Britons, should have been completely annihilated, or even so completely absorbed that it is vain to seek after Celtic elements in the existing English race. Of deliberate wholesale extermination of the Celtic race, all of them who could not fly to Wales or Scotland, we hear nothing; and without some such extermination one would suppose that a great mass of them must have remained in the country, their lot the obscure and, so to speak, underground lot of a subject race, but yet insensibly getting mixed with

their conquerors, and their blood entering into the composition of a new people, in which the stock of the conquerors counts for most, but the stock of the conquered, too, counts for something. How little the triumph of the conqueror's laws, manners, and language, proves the extinction of the old race, we may see by looking at France; Gaul was Latinised in language, manners, and laws, and yet her people remained essentially Celtic. The Germanisation of Britain went far deeper than the Latinisation of France, and not only laws, manners, and language, but the main current of the blood, became Germanic; but how, without some process of radical extirpation, of which, as I say, there is no evidence, can there have failed to subsist in Britain, as in Gaul, a Celtic current too? The indications of this in our language have never yet been thoroughly searched out; the Celtic names of places prove nothing, of course, as to the point here in question; they come from the pre-historic times, the times before the nations, Germanic or Celtic, had crystallised, and they are everywhere, as the impetuous Celt was formerly everywhere—in the Alps, the Apennines, the Cevennes, the Rhine, the Po, as well as in the Thames, the Humber, Cumberland, London. But it is said that the words of Celtic origin for things having to do with every-day peaceful life—the life of a settled nation—words like *basket* (to take an instance which all the world knows) form a much larger body in our language than is commonly supposed; it is said that a number of our raciest, most idiomatic, popular words—for example, *bam, kick, whop, twaddle, fudge, hitch, muggy*—are Celtic. These assertions require to be carefully examined, and it by no means follows that because an English

word is found in Celtic, therefore we get it from thence; but they have not yet had the attention which, as illustrating through language this matter of the subsistence and intermingling in our nation of a Celtic part, they merit.

Nor have the physiological data which illustrate this matter had much more attention from us in England. But in France, a physician, half English by blood though a Frenchman by home and language, Monsieur W. F. Edwards, brother to Monsieur Milne-Edwards, the well-known zoologist, published in 1839 a letter to Monsieur Amedée Thierry with this title: *Des Caractères Physiologiques des Races Humaines considérés dans leurs Rapports avec l'Histoire.* The letter attracted great attention on the Continent; it fills not much more than a hundred pages, and they are a hundred pages which well deserve reading and re-reading. Monsieur Thierry in his *Histoire des Gaulois* had divided the population of Gaul into certain groups, and the object of Monsieur Edwards was to try this division by physiology. Groups of men have, he says, their physical type which distinguishes them, as well as their language; the traces of this physical type endure as the traces of language endure, and physiology is enabled to verify history by them. Accordingly, he determines the physical type of each of the two great Celtic families, the Gaels and the Cymris, who are said to have been distributed in a certain order through Gaul, and then he tracks these types in the population of France at the present day, and so verifies the alleged original order of distribution. In doing this, he makes excursions into neighbouring countries where the Gaels and the Cymris have been, and he declares that in England he finds abundant traces of the physical type which

he has established as the Cymric still subsisting in our population, and having descended from the old British possessors of our soil before the Saxon conquest. But if we are to believe the current English opinion, says Monsieur Edwards, the stock of these old British possessors is clean gone. On this opinion he makes the following comment:—

"In the territory occupied by the Saxons, the Britons were no longer an independent nation, nor even a people with any civil existence at all. For history, therefore, they were dead, above all for history as it was then written; but they had not perished; they still lived on, and undoubtedly in such numbers as the remains of a great nation, in spite of its disasters, might still be expected to keep. That the Britons were destroyed or expelled from England, properly so called, is, as I have said, a popular opinion in that country. It is founded on the exaggeration of the writers of history; but in these very writers, when we come to look closely at what they say, we find the confession that the remains of this people were reduced to a state of strict servitude. Attached to the soil, they will have shared in that emancipation which during the course of the middle ages gradually restored to political life the mass of the population in the countries of Western Europe; recovering by slow degrees their rights without resuming their name, and rising gradually with the rise of industry, they will have got spread through all ranks of society. The gradualness of this movement, and the obscurity which enwrapped its beginnings, allowed the contempt of the conqueror and the shame of the conquered to become fixed feelings; and so it turns out, that an Englishman who now thinks himself sprung

from the Saxons or the Normans, is often in reality the descendant of the Britons."

So physiology, as well as language, incomplete though the application of their tests to this matter has hitherto been, may lead us to hesitate before accepting the round assertion that it is vain to search for Celtic elements in any modern Englishman. But it is not only by the tests of physiology and language that we can try this matter. As there are for physiology physical marks, such as the square head of the German, the round head of the Gael, the oval head of the Cymri, which determine the type of a people, so for criticism there are spiritual marks which determine the type, and make us speak of the Greek genius, the Teutonic genius, the Celtic genius, and so on. Here is another test at our service; and this test, too, has never yet been thoroughly employed. Foreign critics have indeed occasionally hazarded the idea that in English poetry there is a Celtic element traceable; and Mr. Morley, in his very readable as well as very useful book on the English writers before Chaucer, has a sentence which struck my attention when I read it, because it expresses an opinion which I, too, have long held. Mr. Morley says: "The main current of English literature cannot be disconnected from the lively Celtic wit in which it has one of its sources. The Celts do not form an utterly distinct part of our mixed population. But for early, frequent, and various contact with the race that in its half-barbarous days invented Ossian's dialogues with St. Patrick, and that quickened afterwards the Northmen's blood in France, Germanic England would not have produced a Shakspeare." But there Mr. Morley leaves the matter. He indicates this Celtic

element and influence, but he does not show us—it did not come within the scope of his work to show us—how this influence has declared itself. Unlike the physiological test, or the linguistic test, this literary, spiritual test is one which I may perhaps be allowed to try my hand at applying. I say that there is a Celtic element in the English nature, as well as a Germanic element, and that this element manifests itself in our spirit and literature. But before I try to point out how it manifests itself, it may be as well to get a clear notion of what we mean by a Celtic element, a Germanic element; what characters, that is, determine for us the Celtic genius, the Germanic genius, as we commonly conceive the two.

IV

Let me repeat what I have often said of the characteristics which mark the English spirit, the English genius. This spirit, this genius, judged, to be sure, rather from a friend's than an enemy's point of view, yet judged on the whole fairly, is characterised, I have repeatedly said, by *energy with honesty*. Take away some of the energy which comes to us, as I believe, in part from Celtic and Roman sources; instead of energy, say rather *steadiness;* and you have the Germanic genius: *steadiness with honesty*. It is evident how nearly the two characterisations approach one another; and yet they leave, as we shall see, a great deal of room for difference. Steadiness with honesty; the danger for a national spirit thus composed is the humdrum, the plain and ugly, the ignoble: in a word, *das Gemeine, die*

Gemeinheit, that curse of Germany, against which Goethe was all his life fighting. The excellence of a national spirit thus composed is freedom from whim, flightiness, perverseness; patient fidelity to Nature—in a word, *science*—leading it at last, though slowly, and not by the most brilliant road, out of the bondage of the humdrum and common, into the better life. The universal dead-level of plainness and homeliness, the lack of all beauty and distinction in form and feature, the slowness and clumsiness of the language, the eternal beer, sausages, and bad tobacco, the blank commonness everywhere, pressing at last like a weight on the spirits of the traveller in Northern Germany, and making him impatient to be gone—this is the weak side; the industry, the well-doing, the patient steady elaboration of things, the idea of science governing all departments of human activity—this is the strong side; and through this side of her genius, Germany has already obtained excellent results, and is destined, we may depend upon it, however her pedantry, her slowness, her fumbling, her ineffectiveness, her bad government, may at times make us cry out, to an immense development.[1]

For dulness, the creeping Saxons, says an old Irish poem, assigning the characteristics for which different nations are celebrated,—

> For acuteness and valour, the Greeks,
> For excessive pride, the Romans,
> For dulness, the creeping Saxons;
> For beauty and amorousness, the Gaedhils.

We have seen in what sense, and with what explanation, this characterisation of the German may be

[1] It is to be remembered that the above was written before the recent war between Prussia and Austria.

allowed to stand; now let us come to the beautiful and amorous Gaedhil. Or rather, let us find a definition which may suit both branches of the Celtic family, the Cymri as well as the Gael. It is clear that special circumstances may have developed some one side in the national character of Cymri or Gael, Welshman or Irishman, so that the observer's notice shall be readily caught by this side, and yet it may be impossible to adopt it as characteristic of the Celtic nature generally. For instance, in his beautiful essay on the poetry of the Celtic races, M. Renan, with his eyes fixed on the Bretons and the Welsh, is struck with the timidity, the shyness, the delicacy of the Celtic nature, its preference for a retired life, its embarrassment at having to deal with the great world. He talks of his *douce petite race naturellement chrétienne*, his *race fière et timide, à l'extérieur gauche et embarrassée*. But it is evident that this description, however well it may do for the Cymri, will never do for the Gael, never do for the typical Irishman of Donnybrook fair. Again, M. Renan's *infinie délicatesse de sentiment qui caractérise la race Celtique*, how little that accords with the popular conception of an Irishman who wants to borrow money! *Sentiment* is, however, the word which marks where the Celtic races really touch and are one; sentimental, if the Celtic nature is to be characterised by a single term, is the best term to take. An organisation quick to feel impressions, and feeling them very strongly; a lively personality therefore, keenly sensitive to joy and to sorrow; this is the main point. If the downs of life too much outnumber the ups, this temperament, just because it is so quickly and nearly conscious of all impressions, may no doubt be seen shy and wounded; it

may be seen in wistful regret, it may be seen in passionate, penetrating melancholy; but its essence is to aspire ardently after life, light, and emotion, to be expansive, adventurous, and gay. Our word *gay*, it is said, is itself Celtic. It is not from *gaudium*, but from the Celtic *gair*, to laugh;[1] and the impressionable Celt, soon up and soon down, is the more down because it is so his nature to be up — to be sociable, hospitable, eloquent, admired, figuring away brilliantly. He loves bright colours, he easily becomes audacious, overcrowing, full of fanfaronade. The German, say the physiologists, has the larger volume of intestines (and who that has ever seen a German at a table-d'hôte will not readily believe this?), the Frenchman has the more developed organs of respiration. That is just the expansive, eager Celtic nature; the head in the air, snuffing and snorting; *a proud look and a high stomach*, as the Psalmist says, but without any such settled savage temper as the Psalmist seems to impute by those words. For good and for bad, the Celtic genius is more airy and unsubstantial, goes less near the ground than the German. The Celt is often called sensual; but it is not so much the vulgar satisfactions of sense that attract him as emotion and excitement; he is truly, as I began by saying, sentimental.

[1] The etymology is Monsieur Henri Martin's, but Lord Strangford says:—"Whatever *gai* may be, it is assuredly not Celtic. Is there any authority for this word *gair*, to laugh, or rather 'laughter,' beyond O'Reilly? O'Reilly is no authority at all except in so far as tested and passed by the new school. It is hard so give up *gavisus*. But Diez, chief authority in Romanic matters, is content to accept Muratori's reference to an old High-German *gâhi*, modern *jähe*, sharp, quick, sudden, brisk, and so to the sense of lively, animated, high in spirits."

Sentimental—*always ready to react against the despotism of fact;* that is the description a great friend [1] of the Celt gives of him; and it is not a bad description of the sentimental temperament; it lets us into the secret of its dangers and of its habitual want of success. Balance, measure, and patience, these are the eternal conditions, even supposing the happiest temperament to start with, of high success; and balance, measure, and patience are just what the Celt has never had. Even in the world of spiritual creation, he has never, in spite of his admirable gifts of quick perception and warm emotion, succeeded perfectly, because he never has had steadiness, patience, sanity enough to comply with the conditions under which alone can expression be perfectly given to the finest perceptions and emotions. The Greek has the same perceptive, emotional temperament as the Celt; but he adds to this temperament the sense of *measure;* hence his admirable success in the plastic arts, in which the Celtic genius, with its chafing against the despotism of fact, its perpetual straining after mere emotion, has accomplished nothing. In the comparatively petty art of ornamentation, in rings, brooches, crosiers, relic-cases, and so on, he has done just enough to show his delicacy of taste, his happy temperament; but the grand difficulties of painting and sculpture, the prolonged dealings of spirit with matter, he has never had patience for. Take the more spiritual arts of music and poetry. All that emotion alone can do in music the Celt has done; the very soul of emotion breathes in the Scotch and Irish airs; but with all this power of musical feeling, what has the Celt, so

[1] Monsieur Henri Martin, whose chapters on the Celts, in his *Histoire de France*, are full of information and interest.

eager for emotion that he has not patience for science, effected in music, to be compared with what the less emotional German, steadily developing his musical feeling with the science of a Sebastian Bach or a Beethoven, has effected? In poetry, again—poetry which the Celt has so passionately, so nobly loved; poetry where emotion counts for so much, but where reason, too, reason, measure, sanity, also count for so much—the Celt has shown genius, indeed, splendid genius; but even here his faults have clung to him, and hindered him from producing great works, such as other nations with a genius for poetry—the Greeks, say, or the Italians—have produced. The Celt has not produced great poetical works, he has only produced poetry with an air of greatness investing it all, and sometimes giving, moreover, to short pieces, or to passages, lines, and snatches of long pieces, singular beauty and power. And yet he loved poetry so much that he grudged no pains to it; but the true art, the *architectonicé* which shapes great works, such as the *Agamemnon* or the *Divine Comedy*, comes only after a steady, deep-searching survey, a firm conception of the facts of human life, which the Celt has not patience for. So he runs off into technic, where he employs the utmost elaboration, and attains astonishing skill; but in the contents of his poetry you have only so much interpretation of the world as the first dash of a quick, strong perception, and then sentiment, infinite sentiment, can bring you. Here, too, his want of sanity and steadfastness has kept the Celt back from the highest success.

If his rebellion against fact has thus lamed the Celt even in spiritual work, how much more must it have lamed him in the world of business and politics!

The skilful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is needed both to make progress in material civilisation, and also to form powerful states, is just what the Celt has least turn for. He is sensual, as I have said, or at least sensuous; loves bright colours, company, and pleasure; and here he is like the Greek and Latin races; but compare the talent the Greek and Latin (or Latinised) races have shown for gratifying their senses, for procuring an outward life, rich, luxurious, splendid, with the Celt's failure to reach any material civilisation sound and satisfying, and not out at elbows, poor, slovenly, and half-barbarous. The sensuousness of the Greek made Sybaris and Corinth, the sensuousness of the Latin made Rome and Baiæ, the sensuousness of the Latinised Frenchman makes Paris; the sensuousness of the Celt proper has made Ireland. Even in his ideal heroic times, his gay and sensuous nature cannot carry him, in the appliances of his favourite life of sociability and pleasure, beyond the gross and creeping Saxon whom he despises; the regent Breas, we are told in the *Battle of Moytura of the Fomorians*, became unpopular because "the knives of his people were not greased at his table, nor did their breath smell of ale at the banquet." In its grossness and barbarousness is not that Saxon, as Saxon as it can be? just what the Latinised Norman, sensuous and sociable like the Celt, but with the talent to make this bent of his serve to a practical embellishment of his mode of living, found so disgusting in the Saxon.

And as in material civilisation he has been ineffectual, so has the Celt been ineffectual in politics. This colossal, impetuous, adventurous wanderer, the Titan of the early world, who in primitive times

fills so large a place on earth's scene, dwindles and dwindles as history goes on, and at last is shrunk to what we now see him. For ages and ages the world has been constantly slipping, ever more and more, out of the Celt's grasp. "They went forth to the war," Ossian says most truly, "*but they always fell.*"

And yet, if one sets about constituting an ideal genius, what a great deal of the Celt does one find oneself drawn to put into it! Of an ideal genius one does not want the elements, any of them, to be in a state of weakness; on the contrary, one wants all of them to be in the highest state of power; but with a law of measure, of harmony, presiding over the whole. So the sensibility of the Celt, if everything else were not sacrificed to it, is a beautiful and admirable force. For sensibility, the power of quick and strong perception and emotion, is one of the very prime constituents of genius, perhaps its most positive constituent; it is to the soul what good senses are to the body, the grand natural condition of successful activity. Sensibility gives genius its materials; one cannot have too much of it, if one can but keep its master and not be its slave. Do not let us wish that the Celt had had less sensibility, but that he had been more master of it. Even as it is, if his sensibility has been a source of weakness to him, it has been a source of power too, and a source of happiness. Some people have found in the Celtic nature and its sensibility the main root out of which chivalry and romance and the glorification of a feminine ideal spring; this is a great question, with which I cannot deal here. Let me notice in passing, however, that there is, in truth, a Celtic air about the extravagance of chivalry, its reaction against the despotism of fact, its straining

human nature further than it will stand. But putting all this question of chivalry and its origin on one side, no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret. Again, his sensibility gives him a peculiarly near and intimate feeling of nature and the life of nature; here, too, he seems in a special way attracted by the secret before him, the secret of natural beauty and natural magic, and to be close to it, to half-divine it. In the productions of the Celtic genius, nothing, perhaps, is so interesting as the evidences of this power: I shall have occasion to give specimens of them by and by. The same sensibility made the Celts full of reverence and enthusiasm for genius, learning, and the things of the mind; *to be a bard, freed a man*—that is a characteristic stroke of this generous and ennobling ardour of theirs, which no race has ever shown more strongly. Even the extravagance and exaggeration of the sentimental Celtic nature has often something romantic and attractive about it, something which has a sort of smack of misdirected good. The Celt, undisciplinable, anarchical, and turbulent by nature, but out of affection and admiration giving himself body and soul to some leader, that is not a promising political temperament, it is just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament, disciplinable and steadily obedient within certain limits, but retaining an inalienable part of freedom and self-dependence; but it is a temperament for which one has a kind of sympathy notwithstanding. And very often, for the gay defiant reaction against fact of the lively Celtic nature one has more than sympathy; one feels, in

spite of the extravagance, in spite of good sense disapproving, magnetised and exhilarated by it. The Gauls had a rule inflicting a fine on every warrior who, when he appeared on parade, was found to stick out too much in front—to be corpulent, in short. Such a rule is surely the maddest article of war ever framed, and to people to whom nature has assigned a large volume of intestines, must appear, no doubt, horrible; but yet has it not an audacious, sparkling, immaterial manner with it, which lifts one out of routine, and sets one's spirits in a glow?

All tendencies of human nature are in themselves vital and profitable; when they are blamed, they are only to be blamed relatively, not absolutely. This holds true of the Saxon's phlegm as well as of the Celt's sentiment. Out of the steady humdrum habit of the creeping Saxon, as the Celt calls him—out of his way of going near the ground—has come, no doubt, Philistinism, that plant of essentially Germanic growth, flourishing with its genuine marks only in the German fatherland, Great Britain and her colonies, and the United States of America; but what a soul of goodness there is in Philistinism itself! and this soul of goodness I, who am often supposed to be Philistinism's mortal enemy merely because I do not wish it to have things all its own way, cherish as much as anybody. This steady-going habit leads at last, as I have said, up to science, up to the comprehension and interpretation of the world. With us in Great Britain, it is true, it does not seem to lead so far as that; it is in Germany, where the habit is more unmixed, that it can lead to science. Here with us it seems at a certain point to meet with a conflicting force, which checks it and prevents its pushing on to science;

but before reaching this point what conquests has it not won! and all the more, perhaps, for stopping short at this point, for spending its exertions within a bounded field, the field of plain sense, of direct practical utility. How it has augmented the comforts and conveniences of life for us! Doors that open, windows that shut, locks that turn, razors that shave, coats that wear, watches that go, and a thousand more such good things, are the invention of the Philistines.

Here, then, if commingling there is in our race, are two very unlike elements to commingle; the steady-going Saxon temperament and the sentimental Celtic temperament. But before we go on to try and verify, in our life and literature, the alleged fact of this commingling, we have yet another element to take into account, the Norman element. The critic in the *Saturday Review*, whom I have already quoted, says that in looking for traces of Normanism in our national genius, as in looking for traces of Celtism in it, we do but lose our labour; he says, indeed, that there went to the original making of our nation a very great deal more of a Norman element than of a Celtic element, but he asserts that both elements have now so completely disappeared that it is vain to look for any trace of either of them in the modern Englishman. But this sort of assertion I do not like to admit without trying it a little. I want, therefore, to get some plain notion of the Norman habit and genius, as I have sought to get some plain notion of the Saxon and Celtic. Some people will say that the Normans are Teutonic, and that therefore the distinguishing characters of the German genius must be those of their genius also; but the matter cannot be settled in this speedy

fashion. No doubt the basis of the Norman race is Teutonic; but the governing point in the history of the Norman race—so far, at least, as we English have to do with it—is not its Teutonic origin, but its Latin civilisation. The French people have, as I have already remarked, an undoubtedly Celtic basis, yet so decisive in its effect upon a nation's habit and character can be the contact with a stronger civilisation that Gaul, without changing the basis of her blood, became, for all practical intents and purposes, a Latin country, France and not Ireland, through the Roman conquest. Latinism conquered Celtism in her, as it also conquered the Germanism imported by the Frankish and other invasions; Celtism is, however, I need not say, everywhere manifest still in the French nation; even Germanism is distinctly traceable in it, as any one who attentively compares the French with other Latin races will see. No one can look carefully at the French troops in Rome, amongst the Italian population, and not perceive this trace of Germanism; I do not mean in the Alsatian soldiers only, but in the soldiers of genuine France. But the governing character of France, as a power in the world, is Latin; such was the force of Greek and Roman civilisation upon a race whose whole mass remained Celtic, and where the Celtic language still lingered on, they say, among the common people, for some five or six centuries after the Roman conquest. But the Normans in Neustria lost their old Teutonic language in a wonderfully short time; when they conquered England they were already Latinised; with them were a number of Frenchmen by race, men from Anjou and Poitou, so they brought into England more non-Teutonic blood, besides what they had themselves got by

intermarriage, than is commonly supposed; the great point, however, is, that by civilisation this vigorous race, when it took possession of England, was Latin.

These Normans, who in Neustria had lost their old Teutonic tongue so rapidly, kept in England their new Latin tongue for some three centuries. It was Edward the Third's reign before English came to be used in law-pleadings and spoken at court. Why this difference? Both in Neustria and in England the Normans were a handful; but in Neustria, as Teutons, they were in contact with a more advanced civilisation than their own; in England, as Latins, with a less advanced. The Latinised Normans in England had the sense for fact, which the Celts had not; and the love of strenuousness, clearness, and rapidity, the high Latin spirit, which the Saxons had not. They hated the slowness and dulness of the creeping Saxon; it offended their clear, strenuous talent for affairs, as it offended the Celt's quick and delicate perception. The Normans had the Roman talent for affairs, the Roman decisiveness in emergencies. They have been called prosaic, but this is not a right word for them; they were neither sentimental, nor, strictly speaking, poetical. They had more sense for rhetoric than for poetry, like the Romans; but, like the Romans, they had too high a spirit not to like a noble intellectual stimulus of some kind, and thus they were carried out of the region of the merely prosaic. Their foible—the bad excess of their characterising quality of strenuousness—was not a prosaic flatness, it was hardness and insolence.

I have been obliged to fetch a very wide circuit, but at last I have got what I went to seek. I have

got a rough, but, I hope, clear notion of these three forces, the Germanic genius, the Celtic genius, the Norman genius. The Germanic genius has steadiness as its main basis, with commonness and humdrum for its defect, fidelity to nature for its excellence. The Celtic genius, sentiment as its main basis, with love of beauty, charm, and spirituality for its excellence, ineffectualness and self-will for its defect. The Norman genius, talent for affairs as its main basis, with strenuousness and clear rapidity for its excellence, hardness and insolence for its defect. And now to try and trace these in the composite English genius.

V

To begin with what is more external. If we are so wholly Anglo-Saxon and Germanic as people say, how comes it that the habits and gait of the German language are so exceedingly unlike ours? Why while the *Times* talks in this fashion: "At noon a long line of carriages extended from Pall Mall to the Peers' entrance of the Palace of Westminster," does the *Cologne Gazette* talk in this other fashion: "Nachdem die Vorbereitungen zu dem auf dem Gürzenich-Saale zu Ehren der Abgeordneten Statt finden sollenden Bankette bereits vollständig getroffen worden waren, fand heute vormittag auf polizeiliche Anordnung die Schliessung sämmtlicher Zugänge zum Gürzenich Statt?"[1] Surely the mental habit of people who express their thoughts in so very

[1] The above is really a sentence taken from the *Cologne Gazette*. Lord Strangford's comment here is as follows:— "Modern Germanism, in a general estimate of Germanism,

different a manner, the one rapid, the other slow, the one plain, the other embarrassed, the one trailing, the other striding, cannot be essentially the same. The English language, strange compound as it is, with its want of inflections, and with all the difficulties which this want of inflections brings upon it, has yet made itself capable of being, in good hands, a business-instrument as ready, direct, and clear, as French or Latin. Again: perhaps no nation, after the Greeks and Romans, has so clearly felt in what true rhetoric, rhetoric of the best kind, consists, and reached so high a pitch of excellence in this, as the English. Our sense for rhetoric has in some ways done harm to us in our cultivation of literature, harm to us, still more, in our cultivation of science; but in the true sphere of rhetoric, in public speaking, this sense has given us orators whom I do think we may, without fear of being contradicted and accused of blind national vanity, assert to have inherited the great Greek and Roman oratorical tradition more than the orators of any other country. Strafford, Bolingbroke, the two Pitts, Fox—to cite no other names—I imagine few will dispute that these call up the notion of an oratory, in kind, in extent, in power,

should not be taken, absolutely and necessarily, as the constant, whereof we are the variant. The Low-Dutch of Holland, anyhow, are indisputably as genuine Dutch as the High-Dutch of Germany Proper. But do they write sentences like this one,—*informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum?* If not, the question must be asked, not how we have come to deviate, but how the Germans have come to deviate. Our modern English prose in plain matters is often all just the same as the prose of *King Alfred* and the *Chronicle*. Ohthere's *North Sea Voyage* and Wulfstan's *Baltic Voyage* is the sort of thing which is sent in every day, one may say, to the Geographical or Ethnological Society, in the whole style and turn of phrase and thought."

The mass of a stock must supply our data for judging the stock. But see, moreover, what I have said at p. 94.

coming nearer than any other body of modern oratory to the oratory of Greece and Rome. And the affinity of spirit in our best public life and greatest public men to those of Rome has often struck observers, foreign as well as English. Now, not only have the Germans shown no eminent aptitude for rhetoric such as the English have shown—that was not to be expected, since our public life has done so much to develop an aptitude of this kind, and the public life of the Germans has done so little—but they seem in a singular degree devoid of any aptitude at all for rhetoric. Take a speech from the throne in Prussia, and compare it with a speech from the throne in England. Assuredly it is not in speeches from the throne that English rhetoric or any rhetoric shows its best side; they are often cavilled at, often justly cavilled at; no wonder, for this form of composition is beset with very trying difficulties. But what is to be remarked is this—a speech from the throne falls essentially within the sphere of rhetoric, it is one's sense of rhetoric which has to fix its tone and style, so as to keep a certain note always sounding in it; in an English speech from the throne, whatever its faults, this rhetorical note is always struck and kept to; in a Prussian speech from the throne, never. An English speech from the throne is rhetoric; a Prussian speech is half talk—heavy talk—and half effusion. This is one instance, it may be said; true, but in one instance of this kind the presence or the absence of an aptitude for rhetoric is decisively shown. Well, then, why am I not to say that we English get our rhetorical sense from the Norman element in us—our turn for this strenuous, direct, high-spirited talent of oratory, from the influence of the strenuous,

direct, high-spirited Normans? Modes of life, institutions, government, and other such causes, are sufficient, I shall be told, to account for English oratory. Modes of life, institutions, government, climate, and so forth—let me say it once for all—will further or hinder the development of an aptitude but they will not by themselves create the aptitude or explain it. On the other hand, a people's habit and complexion of nature go far to determine its modes of life, institutions, and government, and even to prescribe the limits within which the influences of climate shall tell upon it.

However, it is not my intention, in these remarks, to lay it down for certain that this or that part of our powers, shortcomings, and behaviour, is due to a Celtic, German, or Norman element in us. To establish this I should need much wider limits, and a knowledge, too, far beyond what I possess; all I purpose is to point out certain correspondences, not yet, perhaps, sufficiently observed and attended to, which seem to lead towards certain conclusions. The following up the inquiry till full proof is reached, or perhaps, full disproof, is what I want to suggest to more competent persons. Premising this, I now go on to a second matter, somewhat more delicate and inward than that with which I began. Every one knows how well the Greek and Latin races, with their direct sense for the visible, palpable world, have succeeded in the plastic arts. The sheer German races, too, with their honest love of fact, and their steady pursuit of it—their fidelity to nature, in short—have attained a high degree of success in these arts; few people will deny that Albert Dürer and Rubens, for example, are to be called masters in painting, and in the high kind of painting. The

Celtic races, on the other hand, have shown a singular inaptitude for the plastic arts; the abstract, severe character of the Druidical religion, its dealing with the eye of the mind rather than the eye of the body, its having no elaborate temples and beautiful idols, all point this way from the first; its sentiment cannot satisfy itself, cannot even find a resting-place for itself, in colour and form; it presses on to the impalpable, the ideal. The forest of trees and the forest of rocks, not hewn timber and carved stones, suit its aspirations for something not to be bounded or expressed. With this tendency, the Celtic races have, as I remarked before, been necessarily almost impotent in the higher branches of the plastic arts. Ireland, that has produced so many powerful spirits, has produced no great sculptors or painters. Cross into England. The inaptitude for the plastic art strikingly diminishes, as soon as the German, not the Celtic element, preponderates in the race. And yet in England, too, in the English race, there is something which seems to prevent our reaching real mastership in the plastic arts, as the more unmixed German races have reached it. Reynolds and Turner are painters of genius, who can doubt it? but take a European jury, the only competent jury in these cases, and see if you can get a verdict giving them the rank of masters, as this rank is given to Raphael and Correggio, or to Albert Dürer and Rubens. And observe in what points our English pair succeed, and in what they fall short. They fall short in *architectonicé*, in the highest power of composition, by which painting accomplishes the very uttermost which it is given to painting to accomplish; the highest sort of composition, the highest application of the art of painting, they either do

not attempt, or they fail in it. Their defect, therefore, is on the side of art, of plastic art. And they succeed in magic, in beauty, in grace, in expressing almost the inexpressible: here is the charm of Reynolds's children and Turner's seas; the impulse to express the inexpressible carries Turner so far that at last it carries him away, and even long before he is quite carried away, even in works that are justly extolled, one can see the stamp-mark, as the French say, of insanity. The excellence, therefore, the success, is on the side of spirit. Does not this look as if a Celtic stream met the main German current in us, and gave it a somewhat different course from that which it takes naturally? We have Germanism enough in us, enough patient love for fact and matter, to be led to attempt the plastic arts, and we make much more way in them than the pure Celtic races make; but at a certain point our Celtism comes in, with its love of emotion, sentiment, the inexpressible, and gives our best painters a bias. And the point at which it comes in is just that critical point where the flowering of art into its perfection commences; we have plenty of painters who never reach this point at all, but remain always mere journeymen, in bondage to matter; but those who do reach it, instead of going on to the true consummation of the masters in painting, are a little overbalanced by soul and feeling, work too directly for these, and so do not get out of their art all that may be got out of it.

The same modification of our Germanism by another force which seems Celtic, is visible in our religion. Here, too, we may trace a gradation between Celt, Englishman, and German, the difference which distinguishes Englishman from German

appearing attributable to a Celtic element in us. Germany is the land of exegesis, England is the land of Puritanism. The religion of Wales is more emotional and sentimental than English Puritanism; Romanism has indeed given way to Calvinism among the Welsh—the one superstition has supplanted the other—but the Celtic sentiment which made the Welsh such devout Catholics remains, and gives unction to their Methodism; theirs is not the controversial, rationalistic, intellectual side of Protestantism, but the devout, emotional, religious side. Among the Germans, Protestantism has been carried on into rationalism and science. The English hold a middle place between the Germans and the Welsh; their religion has the exterior forms and apparatus of a rationalism, so far their Germanic nature carries them; but long before they get to science, their feeling, their Celtic element catches them, and turns their religion all towards piety and unction. So English Protestantism has the outside appearance of an intellectual system, and the inside reality of an emotional system: this gives it its tenacity and force, for what is held with the ardent attachment of feeling is believed to have at the same time the scientific proof of reason. The English Puritan, therefore (and Puritanism is the characteristic form of English Protestantism), stands between the German Protestant and the Celtic Methodist; his real affinity indeed, at present, being rather with his Welsh kinsman, if kinsman he may be called, than with his German.

Sometimes one is left in doubt from whence the check and limit to Germanism in us proceeds, whether from a Celtic source or from a Norman source. Of the true steady-going German nature the bane is, as

I remarked, flat commonness; there seems no end to its capacity for platitude; it has neither the quick perception of the Celt to save it from platitude, nor the strenuousness of the Norman; it is only raised gradually out of it by science, but it jogs through almost interminable platitudes first. The English nature is not raised to science, but something in us, whether Celtic or Norman, seems to set a bound to our advance in platitude, to make us either shy of platitude, or impatient of it. I open an English reading-book for children, and I find these two characteristic stories in it, one of them of English growth, the other of German. Take the English story first,—

"A little boy accompanied his elder sister while she busied herself with the labours of the farm, asking questions at every step, and learning the lessons of life without being aware of it.

"'Why, dear Jane,' he said, 'do you scatter good grain on the ground; would it not be better to make good bread of it than to throw it to the greedy chickens?'

"'In time,' replied Jane, 'the chickens will grow big, and each of them will fetch money at the market. One must think on the end to be attained without counting trouble, and learn to wait.'

"Perceiving a colt, which looked eagerly at him, the little boy cried out: 'Jane, why is the colt not in the fields with the labourers helping to draw the carts?'

"'The colt is young,' replied Jane, 'and he must lie idle till he gets the necessary strength; one must not sacrifice the future to the present.'"

The reader will say that is most mean and trivial stuff, the vulgar English nature in full force; just

such food as the Philistine would naturally provide for his young. He will say he can see the boy fed upon it growing up to be like his father, to be all for business, to despise culture, to go through his dull days, and to die without having ever lived. That may be so; but now take the German story (one of Krummacher's), and see the difference,—

"There lived at the court of King Herod a rich man who was the king's chamberlain. He clothed himself in purple and fine linen, and fared like the king himself.

"Once a friend of his youth, whom he had not seen for many years, came from a distant land to pay him a visit. Then the chamberlain invited all his friends and made a feast in honour of the stranger.

"The tables were covered with choice food placed on dishes of gold and silver, and the finest wines of all kinds. The rich man sate at the head of the table, glad to do the honours to his friend who was seated at his right hand. So they ate and drank, and were merry.

"Then the stranger said to the chamberlain of King Herod: 'Riches and splendour like thine are nowhere to be found in my country.' And he praised his greatness, and called him happy above all men on earth.

"Well, the rich man took an apple from a golden vessel. The apple was large, and red, and pleasant to the eye. Then said he: 'Behold, this apple hath rested on gold, and its form is very beautiful.' And he presented it to the stranger, the friend of his youth. The stranger cut the apple in two; and behold, in the middle of it there was a worm!

"Then the stranger looked at the chamberlain;

and the chamberlain bent his eyes on the ground, and sighed."

There it ends. Now I say, one sees there an abyss of platitude open, and the German nature swimming calmly about in it, which seems in some way or other to have its entry screened off for the English nature. The English story leads with a direct issue into practical life: a narrow and dry practical life, certainly, but yet enough to supply a plain motive for the story; the German story leads simply nowhere except into bathos. Shall we say that the Norman talent for affairs saves us here, or the Celtic perceptive instinct? one of them it must be, surely. The Norman turn seems most germane to the matter here immediately in hand; on the other hand, the Celtic turn, or some degree of it, some degree of its quick perceptive instinct, seems necessary to account for the full difference between the German nature and ours. Even in Germans of genius or talent the want of quick light tact, of instinctive perception of the impropriety or impossibility of certain things, is singularly remarkable. Herr Gervinus's prodigious discovery about Handel being an Englishman and Shakspeare a German, the incredible mare's-nest Goethe finds in looking for the origin of Byron's *Manfred*—these are things from which no deliberate care or reflection can save a man; only an instinct can save him from them, an instinct that they are absurd; who can imagine Charles Lamb making Herr Gervinus's blunder, or Shakspeare making Goethe's? but from the sheer German nature this intuitive tact seems something so alien that even genius fails to give it. And yet just what constitutes special power and genius in a man seems often to be his blending with the basis of

his national temperament, some additional gift or grace not proper to that temperament; Shakspeare's greatness is thus in his blending an openness and flexibility of spirit, not English, with the English basis; Addison's, in his blending a moderation and delicacy, not English, with the English basis; Burke's, in his blending a largeness of view and richness of thought, not English, with the English basis. In Germany itself, in the same way, the greatness of their great Frederic lies in his blending a rapidity and clearness, not German, with the German basis; the greatness of Goethe in his blending a love of form, nobility, and dignity—the grand style—with the German basis. But the quick, sure, instinctive perception of the incongruous and absurd not even genius seems to give in Germany; at least, I can think of only one German of genius, Lessing (for Heine was a Jew, and the Jewish temperament is quite another thing from the German), who shows it in an eminent degree.

If we attend closely to the terms by which foreigners seek to hit off the impression which we and the Germans make upon them, we shall detect in these terms a difference which makes, I think, in favour of the notion I am propounding. Nations in hitting off one another's characters are apt, we all know, to seize the unflattering side rather than the flattering; the mass of mankind always do this, and indeed they really see what is novel, and not their own, in a disfiguring light. Thus we ourselves, for instance, popularly say "the phlegmatic Dutchman" rather than "the sensible Dutchman," or "the grimacing Frenchman" rather than "the polite Frenchman." Therefore neither we nor the Germans should exactly accept the description strangers give

of us, but it is enough for my purpose that strangers, in characterising us with a certain shade of difference, do at any rate make it clear that there appears this shade of difference, though the character itself, which they give us both, may be a caricature rather than a faithful picture of us. Now it is to be noticed that those sharp observers, the French—who have a double turn for sharp observation, for they have both the quick perception of the Celt and the Latin's gift for coming plump upon the fact—it is to be noticed, I say, that the French put a curious distinction in their popular, depreciating, we will hope inadequate, way of hitting off us and the Germans. While they talk of the "*bêtise* allemande," they talk of the "*gaucherie* anglaise;" while they talk of the "Allemand *balourd*," they talk of the "Anglais *empêtré*;" while they call the German "*niais*," they call the Englishman "*mélancolique*." The difference between the epithets *balourd* and *empêtré* exactly gives the difference in character I wish to seize; *balourd* means heavy and dull, *empêtré* means hampered and embarrassed. This points to a certain mixture and strife of elements in the Englishman; to the clashing of a Celtic quickness of perception with a Germanic instinct for going steadily along close to the ground. The Celt, as we have seen, has not at all, in spite of his quick perception, the Latin talent for dealing with the fact, dexterously managing it and making himself master of it; Latin or Latinised people have felt contempt for him on this account, have treated him as a poor creature, just as the German, who arrives at fact in a different way from the Latins, but who arrives at it, has treated him. The couplet of Chrestien of Troyes about the Welsh—

. . . Gallois sont tous, par nature,
Plus fous que bêtes en pâture—

is well known, and expresses the genuine verdict of the Latin mind on the Celts. But the perceptive instinct of the Celt feels and anticipates, though he has that in him which cuts him off from command of the world of fact; he sees what is wanting to him well enough; his mere eye is not less sharp, nay, it is sharper, than the Latin's. He is a quick genius, checkmated for want of strenuousness or else patience. The German has not the Latin's sharp precise glance on the world of fact, and dexterous behaviour in it; he fumbles with it much and long, but his honesty and patience give him the rule of it in the long run—a surer rule, some of us think, than the Latin gets; still, his behaviour in it is not quick and dexterous. The Englishman, in so far as he is German—and he is mainly German—proceeds in the steady-going German fashion; if he were all German he would proceed thus for ever without self-consciousness or embarrassment; but, in so far as he is Celtic, he has snatches of quick instinct which often make him feel he is fumbling, show him visions of an easier, more dexterous behaviour, disconcert him and fill him with misgiving. No people, therefore, are so shy, so self-conscious, so embarrassed as the English, because two natures are mixed in them, and natures which pull them such different ways. The Germanic part, indeed, triumphs in us, we are a Germanic people; but not so wholly as to exclude hauntings of Celtism, which clash with our Germanism, producing, as I believe, our *humour*, neither German nor Celtic, and so affect us that we strike people as odd and singular, not to be referred to any known type, and like nothing but ourselves.

"Nearly every Englishman," says an excellent and by no means unfriendly observer, George Sand, "nearly every Englishman, however good-looking he may be, has always something singular about him which easily comes to seem comic—a sort of typical awkwardness (*gaucherie typique*) in his looks or appearance, which hardly ever wears out." I say this strangeness is accounted for by the English nature being mixed as we have seen, while the Latin nature is all of a piece, and so is the German nature, and the Celtic nature.

It is impossible to go very fast when the matter with which one has to deal, besides being new and little explored, is also by its nature so subtle, eluding one's grasp unless one handles it with all possible delicacy and care. It is in our poetry that the Celtic part in us has left its trace clearest, and in our poetry I must follow it before I have done.

VI

If I were asked where English poetry got these three things, its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic, for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully near and vivid way, I should answer, with some doubt, that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt, that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source; with no doubt at all, that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic.

Any German with penetration and tact in matters of literary criticism will own that the principal deficiency of German poetry is in style; that for

style, in the highest sense, it shows but little feeling. Take the eminent masters of style, the poets who best give the idea of what the peculiar power which lies in style is—Pindar, Virgil, Dante, Milton. An example of the peculiar effect which these poets produce, you can hardly give from German poetry. Examples enough you can give from German poetry of the effect produced by genius, thought, and feeling expressing themselves in clear language, simple language, passionate language, eloquent language, with harmony and melody; but not of the peculiar effect exercised by eminent power of style. Every reader of Dante can at once call to mind what the peculiar effect I mean is; I spoke of it in my lectures on translating Homer, and there I took an example of it from Dante, who perhaps manifests it more eminently than any other poet. But from Milton, too, one may take examples of it abundantly; compare this from Milton,—

> . . . nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equal with me in fate,
> So were I equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides—

with this from Goethe,—

> Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt.

Nothing can be better in its way than the style in which Goethe there presents his thought, but it is the style of prose as much as of poetry; it is lucid, harmonious, earnest, eloquent, but it has not received that peculiar kneading, heightening, and re-casting which is observable in the style of the passage from Milton—a style which seems to have for its cause a certain pressure of emotion, and an ever-surging, yet

bridled, excitement in the poet, giving a special intensity to his way of delivering himself. In poetical races and epochs this turn for style is peculiarly observable; and perhaps it is only on condition of having this somewhat heightened and difficult manner, so different from the plain manner of prose, that poetry gets the privilege of being loosed, at its best moments, into that perfectly simple, limpid style, which is the supreme style of all, but the simplicity of which is still not the simplicity of prose. The simplicity of Menander's style is the simplicity of prose, and is the same kind of simplicity as that which Goethe's style, in the passage I have quoted, exhibits; but Menander does not belong to a great poetical moment, he comes too late for it; it is the simple passages in poets like Pindar or Dante which are perfect, being masterpieces of *poetical* simplicity. One may say the same of the simple passages in Shakspeare; they are perfect, their simplicity being a *poetical* simplicity. They are the golden, easeful, crowning moments of a manner which is always pitched in another key from that of prose, a manner changed and heightened; the Elizabethan style, regnant in most of our dramatic poetry to this day, is mainly the continuation of this manner of Shakspeare's. It was a manner much more turbid and strown with blemishes than the manner of Pindar, Dante, or Milton; often it was detestable; but it owed its existence to Shakspeare's instinctive impulse towards *style* in poetry, to his native sense of the necessity for it; and without the basis of style everywhere, faulty though it may in some places be, we should not have had the beauty of expression, unsurpassable for effectiveness and charm, which is reached in Shakspeare's best passages.

The turn for style is perceptible all through English poetry, proving, to my mind, the genuine poetical gift of the race; this turn imparts to our poetry a stamp of high distinction, and sometimes it doubles the force of a poet not by nature of the very highest order, such as Gray, and raises him to a rank beyond what his natural richness and power seem to promise. Goethe, with his fine critical perception, saw clearly enough both the power of style in itself, and the lack of style in the literature of his own country; and perhaps if we regard him solely as a German, not as a European, his great work was that he laboured all his life to impart style into German literature, and firmly to establish it there. Hence the immense importance to him of the world of classical art, and of the productions of Greek or Latin genius, where style so eminently manifests its power. Had he found in the German genius and literature an element of style existing by nature and ready to his hand, half his work, one may say, would have been saved him, and he might have done much more in poetry. But as it was, he had to try and create out of his own powers a style for German poetry, as well as to provide contents for this style to carry; and thus his labour as a poet was doubled.

It is to be observed that power of style, in the sense in which I am here speaking of style, is something quite different from the power of idiomatic, simple, nervous, racy expression, such as the expression of healthy, robust natures so often is, such as Luther's was in a striking degree. Style, in my sense of the word, is a peculiar recasting and heightening, under a certain condition of spiritual excitement, of what a man has to say, in such a manner as to add dignity and distinction to it; and dignity and

distinction are not terms which suit many acts or words of Luther. Deeply touched with the *Gemeinheit* which is the bane of his nation, as he is at the same time a grand example of the honesty which is his nation's excellence, he can seldom even show himself brave, resolute and truthful, without showing a strong dash of coarseness and commonness all the while; the right definition of Luther, as of our own Bunyan, is that he is a Philistine of genius. So Luther's sincere idiomatic German—such language is this: "Hilf lieber Gott, wie manchen Jammer habe ich gesehen, dass der gemeine Mann doch so gar nichts weiss von der christlichen Lehre!"—no more proves a power of style in German literature, than Cobbett's sinewy idiomatic English proves it in English literature. Power of style, properly so-called, as manifested in masters of style like Dante or Milton in poetry, Cicero, Bossuet or Bolingbroke in prose, is something quite different, and has, as I have said, for its characteristic effect, this: to add dignity and distinction.

Style, then, the Germans are singularly without, and it is strange that the power of style should show itself so strongly as it does in the Icelandic poetry, if the Scandinavians are such genuine Teutons as is commonly supposed. Fauriel used to talk of the Scandinavian Teutons and the German Teutons, as if they were two divisions of the same people, and the common notion about them, no doubt, is very much this. Since the war in Schleswig-Holstein, however, all one's German friends are exceedingly anxious to insist on the difference of nature between themselves and the Scandinavians; when one expresses surprise that the German sense of nationality should be so deeply affronted by the rule over

Germans, not of Latins or Celts, but of brother Teutons or next door to it, a German will give you I know not how long a catalogue of the radical points of unlikeness, in genius and disposition, between himself and a Dane. This emboldens me to remark that there is a fire, a sense of style, a distinction, in Icelandic poetry, which German poetry has not. Icelandic poetry, too, shows a powerful and developed technic; and I wish to throw out, for examination by those who are competent to sift the matter, the suggestion that this power of style and development of technic in the Norse poetry seems to point towards an early Celtic influence or intermixture. It is curious that Zeuss, in his grammar, quotes a text which gives countenance to this notion; as late as the ninth century, he says, there were Irish Celts in Iceland; and the text he quotes to show this, is as follows: "In 870 A. D., when the Norwegians came to Iceland, there were Christians there, who departed, and left behind them Irish books, bells, and other things; from whence it may be inferred that these Christians were Irish." I speak, and ought to speak, with the utmost diffidence on all these questions of ethnology; but I must say that when I read this text in Zeuss, I caught eagerly at the clue it seemed to offer; for I had been hearing the *Nibelungen* read and commented on in German schools (German schools have the good habit of reading and commenting on German poetry, as we read and comment on Homer and Virgil, but do *not* read and comment on Chaucer and Shakspeare), and it struck me how the fatal humdrum and want of style of the Gemans had marred their way of telling this magnificent tradition of the *Nibelungen*, and taken half its grandeur and

power out of it; while in the Icelandic poems which deal with this tradition, its grandeur and power are much more fully visible, and everywhere in the poetry of the Edda there is a force of style and a distinction as unlike as possible to the want of both in the German *Nibelungen*.[1] At the same time the Scandinavians have a realism, as it is called, in their genius, which abundantly proves their relationship with the Germans; any one whom Mr. Dasent's delightful books have made acquainted with the prose tales of the Norsemen, will be struck with the stamp of a Teutonic nature in them; but the Norse poetry seems to have something which from Teutonic sources alone it could not have derived; which the Germans have not, and which the Celts have.

This something is *style*, and the Celts certainly have it in a wonderful measure. Style is the most striking quality of their poetry. Celtic poetry seems to make up to itself for being unable to master the world and give an adequate interpretation of it, by throwing all its force into style, by bending language at any rate to its will, and expressing the ideas it

[1] Lord Strangford's note on this is:—"The Irish monks whose bells and books were found in Iceland could not have contributed anything to the old Norse spirit, for they had perished before the first Norseman had set foot on the island. The form of the old Norse poetry known to us as Icelandic, from the accident of its preservation in that island alone, is surely Pan-Teutonic from old times; the art and method of its strictly literary cultivation must have been much influenced by the contemporary Old-English national poetry, with which the Norsemen were in constant contact; and its larger, freer, and wilder spirit must have been owing to their freer and wilder life, to say nothing of their roused and warring paganism. They could never have known any Celts save when living in embryo with other Teutons."

Very likely Lord Strangford is right, but the proposition with which he begins is at variance with what the text quoted by Zeuss alleges.

has with unsurpassable intensity, elevation, and effect. It has all through it a sort of intoxication of style—a *Pindarism*, to use a word formed from the name of the poet, on whom, above all other poets, the power of style seems to have exercised an inspiring and intoxicating effect; and not in its great poets only, in Taliesin, or Llywarch Hen, or Ossian, does the Celtic genius show this Pindarism, but in all its productions,—

> The grave of March is this, and this the grave of Gwythyr;
> Here is the grave of Gwgawn Gleddyfreidd;
> But unknown is the grave of Arthur.

That comes from the Welsh *Memorials of the Graves of the Warriors*, and if we compare it with the familiar memorial inscriptions of an English churchyard (for we English have so much Germanism in us that our productions offer abundant examples of German want of style as well as of its opposite),—

> Afflictions sore long time I bore,
> Physicians were in vain,
> Till God did please Death should me seize
> And ease me of my pain—

if, I say, we compare the Welsh memorial lines with the English, which in their *Gemeinheit* of style are truly Germanic, we shall get a clear sense of what that Celtic talent for style I have been speaking of is.

Or take this epitaph of an Irish Celt, Angus the Culdee, whose *Félire*, or festology, I have already mentioned—a festology in which, at the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth century, he collected from "the countless hosts of the illuminated books of Erin" (to use his own words) the festivals of the Irish saints, his poem having a stanza for every day

in the year. The epitaph on Angus, who died at Cluain Eidhnech, in Queen's County, runs thus,—

> Angus in the assembly of Heaven,
> Here are his tomb and his bed;
> It is from hence he went to death,
> In the Friday, to holy Heaven.
>
> It was in Cluain Eidhnech he was rear'd;
> It was in Cluain Eidhnech he was buried;
> In Cluain Eidhnech, of many crosses,
> He first read his psalms.

That is by no eminent hand; and yet a Greek epitaph could not show a finer perception of what constitutes propriety and felicity of style in compositions of this nature. Take the well-known Welsh prophecy about the fate of the Britons,—

> Their Lord they will praise,
> Their speech they will keep,
> Their land they will lose,
> Except wild Wales.

To however late an epoch that prophecy belongs, what a feeling for style, at any rate, it manifests! And the same thing may be said of the famous Welsh triads. We may put aside all the vexed questions as to their greater or less antiquity, and still what important witness they bear to the genius for literary style of the people who produced them!

Now we English undoubtedly exhibit very often the want of sense for style of our German kinsmen. The churchyard lines I just now quoted afford an instance of it; but the whole branch of our literature —and a very popular branch it is, our hymnology— to which those lines are to be referred, is one continued instance of it. Our German kinsmen and we are the great people for hymns. The Germans are very proud of their hymns, and we are very proud

of ours; but it is hard to say which of the two, the German hymn-book or ours, has least poetical worth in itself, or does least to prove genuine poetical power in the people producing it. I have not a word to say against Sir Roundell Palmer's choice and arrangement of materials for his *Book of Praise;* I am content to put them on a level (and that is giving them the highest possible rank) with Mr. Palgrave's choice and arrangement of materials for his *Golden Treasury;* but yet no sound critic can doubt that, so far as poetry is concerned, while the *Golden Treasury* is a monument of a nation's strength, the *Book of Praise* is a monument of a nation's weakness. Only the German race, with its want of quick instinctive tact, of delicate, sure perception, could have invented the hymn as the Germans and we have it; and our non-German turn for style—style, of which the very essence is a certain happy fineness and truth of poetical perception—could not but desert us when our German nature carried us into a kind of composition which can please only when the perception is somewhat blunt. Scarcely any one of us ever judges our hymns fairly, because works of this kind have two sides—their side for religion and their side for poetry. Everything which has helped a man in his religious life, everything which associates itself in his mind with the growth of that life, is beautiful and venerable to him; in this way, productions of little or no poetical value, like the German hymns and ours, may come to be regarded as very precious. Their worth in this sense, as means by which we have been edified, I do not for a moment hold cheap; but there is an edification proper to all our stages of development, the highest as well as the lowest, and it is for

man to press on towards the highest stages of his development, with the certainty that for those stages, too, means of edification will not be found wanting. Now certainly it is a higher state of development when our fineness of perception is keen than when it is blunt. And if—whereas the Semitic genius placed its highest spiritual life in the religious sentiment, and made that the basis of its poetry—the Indo-European genius places its highest spiritual life in the imaginative reason, and makes that the basis of its poetry, we are none the better for wanting the perception to discern a natural law, which is, after all, like every natural law, irresistible; we are none the better for trying to make ourselves Semitic, when Nature has made us Indo-European, and to shift the basis of our poetry. We may mean well; all manner of good may happen to us on the road we go; but we are not on our own real right road, the road we must in the end follow.

That is why, when our hymns betray a false tendency by losing a power which accompanies the poetical work of our race on our other more suitable lines, the indication thus given is of great value and instructiveness for us. One of our main gifts for poetry deserts us in our hymns, and so gives us a hint as to the one true basis for the spiritual work of an Indo-European people, which the Germans, who have not this particular gift of ours, do not and cannot get in this way, though they may get it in others. It is worth noticing that the masterpieces of the spiritual work of Indo-Europeans taking the pure religious sentiment, and not the imaginative reason, for their basis, are works like the *Imitation*, the *Dies Iræ*, the *Stabat Mater*—works clothing themselves in the middle-age Latin, the genuine native

voice of no Indo-European nation. The perfection of their kind, but that kind not perfectly legitimate, they take a language not perfectly legitimate; as if to show, that when mankind's Semitic age is once passed, the age which produced the great incomparable monuments of the pure religious sentiment, the books of Job and Isaiah, the Psalms—works truly to be called inspired, because the same divine power which worked in those who produced them works no longer—as if to show us, that, after this primitive age, we Indo-Europeans must feel these works without attempting to remake them; and that our poetry, if it tries to make itself simply the organ of the religious sentiment, leaves the true course, and must conceal this by not speaking a living language. The moment it speaks a living language, and still makes itself the organ of the religious sentiment only, as in the German and English hymns, it betrays weakness—the weakness of all false tendency.

But if, by attending to the Germanism in us English and to its works, one has come to doubt whether we, too, are not thorough Germans by genius and with the German deadness to style, one has only to repeat to oneself a line of Milton—a poet intoxicated with the passion for style as much as Taliesin or Pindar—to see that we have another side to our genius beside the German one. Whence do we get it? The Normans may have brought in among us the Latin sense for rhetoric and style, for indeed, this sense goes naturally with a high spirit and a strenuousness like theirs, but the sense for style which English poetry shows is something finer than we could well have got from a people so positive and so little poetical as the Normans; and it seems

to me we may much more plausibly derive it from a root of the poetical Celtic nature in us.

Its chord of penetrating passion and melancholy, again, its *Titanism* as we see it in Byron, what other European poetry possesses that like the English, and where do we get it from? The Celts, with their vehement reaction against the despotism of fact, with their sensuous nature, their manifold striving, their adverse destiny, their immense calamities, the Celts are the prime authors of this vein of piercing regret and passion—of this Titanism in poetry. A famous book, Macpherson's *Ossian*, carried in the last century this vein like a flood of lava through Europe. I am not going to criticise Macpherson's *Ossian* here. Make the part of what is forged, modern, tawdry, spurious, in the book, as large as you please; strip Scotland, if you like, of every feather of borrowed plumes which on the strength of Macpherson's *Ossian* she may have stolen from that *vetus et major Scotia*, the true home of the Ossianic poetry, Ireland; I make no objection. But there will still be left in the book a residue with the very soul of the Celtic genius in it, and which has the proud distinction of having brought this soul of the Celtic genius into contact with the genius of the nations of modern Europe, and enriched all our poetry by it. Woody Morven, and echoing Sora, and Selma with its silent halls! we all owe them a debt of gratitude, and when we are unjust enough to forget it, may the Muse forget us! Choose any one of the better passages in Macpherson's *Ossian* and you can see even at this time of day what an apparition of newness and power such a strain must have been to the eighteenth century,—

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they

were desolate. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round her head. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us, for one day we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. Let the blast of the desert come! we shall be renowned in our day."

All Europe felt the power of that melancholy; but what I wish to point out is, that no nation of Europe so caught in its poetry the passionate penetrating accent of the Celtic genius, its strain of Titanism, as the English. Goethe, like Napoleon, felt the spell of Ossian very powerfully, and he quotes a long passage from him in his *Werther*. But what is there Celtic, turbulent, and Titanic about the German Werther, that amiable, cultivated and melancholy young man, having for his sorrow and suicide the perfectly definite motive that Lotte cannot be his? Faust, again, has nothing unaccountable, defiant and Titanic in him; his knowledge does not bring him the satisfaction he expected from it, and meanwhile he finds himself poor and growing old, and baulked of the palpable enjoyment of life; and here is the motive for Faust's discontent. In the most energetic and impetuous of Goethe's creations—his *Prometheus*—it is not Celtic self-will and passion, it is rather the Germanic sense of justice and reason, which revolts against the despotism of Zeus. The German *Sehnsucht* itself is a wistful, soft, tearful longing, rather than a struggling, fierce, passionate one. But the Celtic

melancholy is struggling, fierce, passionate; to catch its note, listen to Llywarch Hen in old age, addressing his crutch,—

O my crutch! is it not autumn, when the fern is red, the water-flag yellow? Have I not hated that which I love?

O my crutch! is it not winter-time now, when men talk together after that they have drunken? Is not the side of my bed left desolate?

O my crutch! is it not spring, when the cuckoo passes through the air, when the foam sparkles on the sea? The young maidens no longer love me.

O my crutch! is it not the first day of May? The furrows, are they not shining; the young corn, is it not springing? Ah! the sight of thy handle makes we wroth.

O my crutch! stand straight, thou wilt support me the better; it is very long since I was Llywarch.

Behold old age, which makes sport of me, from the hair of my head to my teeth, to my eyes, which women loved.

The four things I have all my life most hated fall upon me together,—coughing and old age, sickness and sorrow.

I am old, I am alone, shapeliness and warmth are gone from me; the couch of honour shall be no more mine; I am miserable, I am bent on my crutch.

How evil was the lot allotted to Llywarch, the night when he was brought forth! sorrows without end, and no deliverance from his burden.

There is the Titanism of the Celt, his passionate, turbulent, indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact; and of whom does it remind us so much as of Byron?

> The fire which on my bosom preys
> Is lone as some volcanic isle;
> No torch is kindled at its blaze;
> A funeral pile!

Or, again,—

> Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be.

One has only to let one's memory begin to fetch

passages from Byron striking the same note as that passage from Llywarch Hen, and she will not soon stop. And all Byron's heroes, not so much in collision with outward things, as breaking on some rock of revolt and misery in the depths of their own nature; Manfred, self-consumed, fighting blindly and passionately with I know not what, having nothing of the consistent development and intelligible motive of Faust—Manfred, Lara, Cain, what are they but Titanic? Where in European poetry are we to find this Celtic passion of revolt so warm-breathing, puissant, and sincere; except perhaps in the creation of a yet greater poet than Byron, but an English poet, too, like Byron, in the Satan of Milton?

> . . . What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield,
> And what is else not to be overcome.

There, surely, speaks a genius to whose composition the Celtic fibre was not wholly a stranger!

And as, after noting the Celtic Pindarism or power of style present in our poetry, we noted the German flatness coming in in our hymns, and found here a proof of our compositeness of nature; so, after noting the Celtic Titanism or power of rebellious passion in our poetry, we may also note the Germanic patience and reasonableness in it, and get in this way a second proof how mixed a spirit we have. After Llywarch Hen's,—

> How evil was the lot allotted to Llywarch, the night when he was brought forth—

after Byron's,—

> Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen—

take this of Southey's, in answer to the question whether he would like to have his youth over again,—

> Do I regret the past?
> Would I live o'er again
> The morning hours of life?
> Nay, William, nay, not so!
> Praise be to God who made me what I am,
> Other I would not be.

There we have the other side of our being; the Germanic goodness, docility, and fidelity to nature, in place of the Celtic Titanism.

The Celt's quick feeling for what is noble and distinguished gave his poetry style; his indomitable personality gave it pride and passion; his sensibility and nervous exaltation gave it a better gift still, the gift of rendering with a wonderful felicity the magical charm of nature. The forest solitude, the bubbling spring, the wild flowers, are everywhere in romance. They have a mysterious life and grace there; they are nature's own children, and utter her secret in a way which makes them something quite different from the woods, waters, and plants of Greek and Latin poetry. Now of this delicate magic, Celtic romance is so pre-eminent a mistress, that it seems impossible to believe the power did not come into romance from the Celts.[1] Magic is just the word for it—the magic of nature; not merely the beauty of nature—that the Greeks and Latins had; not merely an honest smack of the soil, a faithful realism

[1] Rhyme—the most striking characteristic of our modern poetry as distinguished from that of the ancients, and a main source, to our poetry, of its magic and charm, of what we call its *romantic element*—rhyme itself, all the weight of evidence tends to show, comes into our poetry from the Celts.

—that the Germans had; but the intimate life of nature, her weird power and her fairy charm. As the Saxon names of places, with the pleasant wholesome smack of the soil in them—Weathersfield, Thaxted, Shalford—are to the Celtic names of places, with their penetrating, lofty beauty—Velindra, Tyntagel, Caernarvon—so is the homely realism of German and Norse nature to the fairy-like loveliness of Celtic nature. Gwydion wants a wife for his pupil: "Well," says Math, "we will seek, I and thou, by charms and illusions, to form a wife for him out of flowers. So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptised her, and gave her the name of Flower-Aspect." Celtic romance is full of exquisite touches like that, showing the delicacy of the Celt's feeling in these matters, and how deeply nature lets him come into her secrets. The quick dropping of blood is called "faster than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth, when the dew of June is at the heaviest." And thus is Olwen described: "More yellow was her hair than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemony amidst the spray of the meadow fountains." For loveliness it would be hard to beat that; and for magical clearness and nearness take the following,—

"And in the evening Peredur entered a valley, and at the head of the valley he came to a hermit's cell, and the hermit welcomed him gladly, and there he spent the night. And in the morning he arose, and when he went forth, behold, a shower of snow

had fallen the night before, and a hawk had killed a wild-fowl in front of the cell. And the noise of the horse scared the hawk away, and a raven alighted upon the bird. And Peredur stood and compared the blackness of the raven, and the whiteness of the snow, and the redness of the blood, to the hair of the lady whom best he loved, which was blacker than the raven, and to her skin, which was whiter than the snow, and to her two cheeks, which were redder than the blood upon the snow appeared to be."

And this, which is perhaps less striking, is not less beautiful,—

"And early in the day Geraint and Enid left the wood, and they came to an open country, with meadows on one hand and mowers mowing the meadows. And there was a river before them, and the horses bent down and drank the water. And they went up out of the river by a steep bank, and there they met a slender stripling with a satchel about his neck; and he had a small blue pitcher in his hand, and a bowl on the mouth of the pitcher."

And here the landscape, up to this point so Greek in its clear beauty, is suddenly magicalised by the romance touch,—

"And they saw a tall tree by the side of the river, one-half of which was in flames from the root to the top, and the other half was green and in full leaf."

Magic is the word to insist upon — a magically vivid and near interpretation of nature; since it is this which constitutes the special charm and power of the effect I am calling attention to, and it is for this that the Celt's sensibility gives him a peculiar aptitude. But the matter needs rather fine handling, and it is easy to make mistakes here in our criticism. In the first place, Europe tends constantly to become

more and more one community, and we tend to become Europeans instead of merely Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians; so whatever aptitude or felicity one people imparts into spiritual work, gets imitated by the others, and thus tends to become the common property of all. Therefore anything so beautiful and attractive as the natural magic I am speaking of, is sure, nowadays, if it appears in the productions of the Celts, or of the English, or of the French, to appear in the productions of the Germans also, or in the productions of the Italians; but there will be a stamp of perfectness and inimitableness about it in the literatures where it is native, which it will not have in the literatures where it is not native. Novalis or Rückert, for instance, have their eye fixed on nature, and have undoubtedly a feeling for natural magic; a rough-and-ready critic easily credits them and the Germans with the Celtic fineness of tact, the Celtic nearness to nature and her secret; but the question is whether the strokes in the German's picture of nature[1] have ever the

[1] Take the following attempt to render the natural magic supposed to pervade Tieck's poetry:—"In diesen Dichtungen herrscht eine geheimnissvolle Innigkeit, ein sonderbares Einverständniss mit der Natur, besonders mit der Pflanzen- und Steinreich. Der Leser fühlt sich da wie in einem verzauberten Walde; er hört die unterirdischen Quellen melodisch rauschen; wildfremde Wunderblumen schauen ihn an mit ihren bunten sehnsüchtigen Augen; unsichtbare Lippen küssen seine Wangen mit neckender Zärtlichkeit; *hohe Pilze, wie goldne Glocken, wachsen klingend empor am Fusse der Bäume;*" and so on. Now that stroke of the *hohe Pilze*, the great funguses, would have been impossible to the tact and delicacy of a born lover of nature like the Celt, and could only have come from a German who has *hineinstudirt* himself into natural magic. It is a crying false note, which carries us at once out of the world of nature-magic and the breath of the woods, into the world of theatre-magic and the smell of gas and orange-peel.

indefinable delicacy, charm, and perfection of the Celt's touch in the pieces I just now quoted, or of Shakspeare's touch in his daffodil, Wordsworth's in his cuckoo, Keats's in his Autumn, Obermann's in his mountain birch-tree, or his Easter-daisy among the Swiss farms. To decide where the gift for natural magic originally lies, whether it is properly Celtic or Germanic, we must decide this question.

In the second place, there are many ways of handling nature, and we are here only concerned with one of them; but a rough-and-ready critic imagines that it is all the same so long as nature is handled at all, and fails to draw the needful distinction between modes of handling her. But these modes are many; I will mention four of them now: there is the conventional way of handling nature, there is the faithful way of handling nature, there is the Greek way of handling nature, there is the magical way of handling nature. In all these three last the eye is on the object, but with a difference; in the faithful way of handling nature, the eye is on the object, and that is all you can say; in the Greek, the eye is on the object, but lightness and brightness are added; in the magical, the eye is on the object, but charm and magic are added. In the conventional way of handling nature, the eye is not on the object; what that means we all know, we have only to think of our eighteenth-century poetry,—

> As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night—

to call up any number of instances. Latin poetry supplies plenty of instances too; if we put this from Propertius's *Hylas*,—

> . . . manus heroum . . .
> Mollia composita litora fronde tegit—

side by side the line of Theocritus by which it was suggested,—

λειμὼν γάρ σφιν ἔκειτο μέγας, στιβάδεσσιν ὀνειαρ—

we get at the same moment a good specimen both of the conventional and of the Greek way of handling nature. But from our own poetry we may get specimens of the Greek way of handling nature, as well as of the conventional: for instance, Keats's,—

> What little town by river or seashore,
> Or mountain-built with quiet citadel,
> Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

is Greek, as Greek as a thing from Homer or Theocritus; it is composed with the eye on the object, a radiancy and light clearness being added. German poetry abounds in specimens of the faithful way of handling nature; an excellent example is to be found in the stanzas called *Zueignung*, prefixed to Goethe's poems; the morning walk, the mist, the dew, the sun, are as faithful as they can be, they are given with the eye on the object, but there the merit of the work, as a handling of nature, stops; neither Greek radiance nor Celtic magic are added; the power of these is not what gives the poem in question its merit, but a power of quite another kind, a power of moral and spiritual emotion. But the power of Greek radiance Goethe could give to his handling of nature, and nobly too, as any one who will read his *Wanderer*—the poem in which a wanderer falls in with a peasant woman and her child by their hut, built out of the ruins of a temple near Cuma—may see. Only the power of natural magic Goethe does not, I think, give; whereas Keats

passes at will from the Greek power to that power which is, as I say, Celtic; from his,—

> What little town, by river or seashore—

to his,—

> White hawthorn and the pastoral eglantine,
> Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves—

or his,—

> . . . magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn—

in which the very same note is struck as in those extracts which I quoted from Celtic romance, and struck with authentic and unmistakeable power.

Shakspeare, in handling nature, touches this Celtic note so exquisitely, that perhaps one is inclined to be always looking for the Celtic note in him, and not to recognise his Greek note when it comes. But if one attends well to the difference between the two notes, and bears in mind, to guide one, such things as Virgil's "moss-grown springs and grass softer than sleep,"—

> Muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba—

as his charming flower-gatherer, who,—

> Pallentes violas et summa papavera carpens
> Narcissum et florem jungit bene olentis anethi—

as his quinces and chestnuts,—

> . . . cana legam tenera lanugine mala
> Castaneasque nuces . . .

then, I think, we shall be disposed to say that in Shakspeare's,—

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine—

it is mainly a Greek note which is struck. Then, again in his,—

. . . look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold!

we are at the very point of transition from the Greek note to the Celtic; there is the Greek clearness and brightness, with the Celtic aerialness and magic coming in. Then we have the sheer, inimitable Celtic note in passages like this,—

Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the bleached margent of the sea—

or this, the last I will quote,—

The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls—

. . . in such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew—

. . . in such a night
Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage.

And those last lines of all are so drenched and intoxicated with the fairy-dew of that natural magic which is our theme, that I cannot do better than end with them.

And now, with the pieces of evidence in our hand, let us go to those who say it is vain to look for Celtic elements in any Englishman, and let us

ask them, first, if they seize what we mean by the power of natural magic in Celtic poetry; secondly, if English poetry does not eminently exhibit this power; and, thirdly, where they suppose English poetry got it from?

I perceive that I shall be accused of having rather the air, in what I have said, of denying this and that gift to the Germans, and of establishing our difference from them a little ungraciously and at their expense. The truth is, few people have any real care to analyse closely in their criticism; they merely employ criticism as a means for heaping all praise on what they like, and all blame on what they dislike. Those of us (and they are many) who owe a great debt of gratitude to the German spirit and to German literature, do not like to be told of any powers being lacking there; we are like the young ladies who think the hero of their novel is only half a hero unless he has all perfections united in him. But nature does not work, either in heroes or races, according to the young ladies' notion. We all are what we are, the hero and the great nation are what they are, by our limitations as well as by our powers, by lacking something as well as by possessing something. It is not always gain to possess this or that gift, or loss to lack this or that gift. Our great, our only first-rate body of contemporary poetry is the German; the grand business of modern poetry—a moral interpretation, from an independent point of view, of man and the world—it is only German poetry, Goethe's poetry, that has, since the Greeks, made much way with. Campbell's power of style, and the natural magic of Keats and Wordsworth, and Byron's Titanic personality, may be wanting to this poetry;

but see what it has accomplished without them! How much more than Campbell with his power of style, and Keats and Wordsworth with their natural magic, and Byron with his Titanic personality! Why, for the immense serious task it had to perform, the steadiness of German poetry, its going near the ground, its patient fidelity to nature, its using great plainness of speech, poetical drawbacks in one point of view, were safeguards and helps in another. The plainness and earnestness of the two lines I have already quoted from Goethe—

> Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt—

compared with the play and power of Shakspeare's style or Dante's, suggest at once the difference between Goethe's task and theirs, and the fitness of the faithful laborious German spirit for its own task. Dante's task was to set forth the lesson of the world from the point of view of mediæval Catholicism; the basis of spiritual life was given, Dante had not to make this anew. Shakspeare's task was to set forth the spectacle of the world when man's spirit re-awoke to the possession of the world at the Renaissance. The spectacle of human life, left to bear its own significance and tell its own story, but shown in all its fulness, variety, and power, is at that moment the great matter; but, if we are to press deeper, the basis of spiritual life is still at that time the traditional religion, reformed or unreformed, of Christendom, and Shakspeare has not to supply a new basis. But when Goethe came, Europe had lost her basis of spiritual life; she had to find it again; Goethe's task was—the inevitable task for the modern poet henceforth is—as it was for the

Greek poet in the days of Pericles, not to preach a sublime sermon on a given text like Dante, not to exhibit all the kingdoms of human life and the glory of them like Shakspeare, but to interpret human life afresh, and to supply a new spiritual basis to it. This is not only a work for style, eloquence, charm, poetry; it is a work for science; and the scientific, serious German spirit, not carried away by this and that intoxication of ear, and eye, and self-will, has peculiar aptitudes for it.

We, on the other hand, do not necessarily gain by the commixture of elements in us; we have seen how the clashing of natures in us hampers and embarrasses our behaviour; we might very likely be more attractive, we might very likely be more successful, if we were all of a piece. Our want of sureness of taste, our eccentricity, come in great measure, no doubt, from our not being all of a piece, from our having no fixed, fatal, spiritual centre of gravity. The Rue de Rivoli is one thing, and Nuremberg is another, and Stonehenge is another; but we have a turn for all three, and lump them all up together. Mr. Tom Taylor's translations from Breton poetry offer a good example of this mixing; he has a genuine feeling for these Celtic matters, and often, as in the *Evil Tribute of Nomenoë*, or in *Lord Nann and the Fairy*, he is, both in movement and expression, true and appropriate; but he has a sort of Teutonism and Latinism in him too, and so he cannot forbear mixing with his Celtic strain such disparates as,—

> 'Twas mirk, mirk night, and the water bright
> Troubled and drumlie flowed—

which is evidently Lowland-Scotchy; or as,—

> Foregad, but thou'rt an artful hand!

which is English-stagey; or as,—

> To Gradlon's daughter, bright of blee,
> Her lover he whispered tenderly—
> *Bethink thee, sweet Dahut! the key!*

which is Anacreontic in the manner of Tom Moore. Yes, it is not a sheer advantage to have several strings to one's bow! if we had been all German, we might have had the science of Germany; if we had been all Celtic we might have been popular and agreeable; if we had been all Latinised, we might have governed Ireland as the French govern Alsace, without getting ourselves detested. But now we have Germanism enough to make us Philistines, and Normanism enough to make us imperious, and Celtism enough to make us self-conscious and awkward; but German fidelity to Nature, and Latin precision and clear reason, and Celtic quick-wittedness and spirituality, we fall short of. Nay, perhaps, if we are doomed to perish (Heaven avert the omen!), we shall perish by our Celtism, by our self-will and want of patience with ideas, our inability to see the way the world is going; and yet those very Celts, by our affinity with whom we are perishing, will be hating and upbraiding us all the time.

This is a somewhat unpleasant view to take of the matter; but if it is true, its being unpleasant does not make it any less true, and we are always the better for seeing the truth. What we here see is not the whole truth, however. So long as this mixed constitution of our nature possesses us, we pay it tribute and serve it; so soon as we possess it, it pays us tribute and serves us. So long as we are blindly and ignorantly rolled about by the forces of our nature, their contradiction baffles us and lames us; so soon as we have clearly discerned what they are,

and begun to apply to them a law of measure, control, and guidance, they may be made to work for our good and to carry us forward. Then we may have the good of our German part, the good of our Latin part, the good of our Celtic part; and instead of one part clashing with the other, we may bring it in to continue and perfect the other, when the other has given us all the good it can yield, and by being pressed further, could only give us its faulty excess. Then we may use the German faithfulness to Nature to give us science, and to free us from insolence and self-will; we may use the Celtic quickness of perception to give us delicacy, and to free us from hardness and Philistinism; we may use the Latin decisiveness to give us strenuous clear method, and to free us from fumbling and idling. Already, in their untrained state, these elements give signs, in our life and literature, of their being present in us, and a kind of prophecy of what they could do for us if they were properly observed, trained, and applied. But this they have not yet been; we ride one force of our nature to death; we will be nothing but Anglo-Saxons in the Old World or in the New; and when our race has built Bold Street, Liverpool, and pronounced it very good, it hurries across the Atlantic, and builds Nashville, and Jacksonville, and Milledgeville, and thinks it is fulfilling the designs of Providence in an incomparable manner. But true Anglo-Saxons, simply and sincerely rooted in the German nature, we are not and cannot be; all we have accomplished by our onesidedness is to blur and confuse the natural basis in ourselves altogether, and to become something eccentric, unattractive, and inharmonious.

A man of exquisite intelligence and charming

character, the late Mr. Cobden, used to fancy that a better acquaintance with the United States was the grand panacea for us; and once in a speech he bewailed the inattention of our seats of learning to them, and seemed to think that if our ingenuous youth at Oxford were taught a little less about the Ilissus, and a little more about Chicago, we should all be the better for it. Chicago has its claims upon us, no doubt; but it is evident that from the point of view to which I have been leading, a stimulation of our Anglo-Saxonism, such as is intended by Mr. Cobden's proposal, does not appear the thing most needful for us; seeing our American brothers themselves have rather, like us, to try and moderate the flame of Anglo-Saxonism in their own breasts, than to ask us to clap the bellows to it in ours. So I am inclined to beseech Oxford, instead of expiating her over-addiction to the Ilissus by lectures on Chicago, to give us an expounder for a still more remote-looking object than the Ilissus—the Celtic languages and literature. And yet why should I call it remote? if, as I have been labouring to show, in the spiritual frame of us English ourselves, a Celtic fibre, little as we may have ever thought of tracing it, lives and works. *Aliens in speech, in religion, in blood!* said Lord Lyndhurst; the philologists have set him right about the speech, the physiologists about the blood; and perhaps, taking religion in the wide but true sense of our whole spiritual activity, those who have followed what I have been saying here will think that the Celt is not so wholly alien to us in religion. But, at any rate, let us consider that of the shrunken and diminished remains of this great primitive race, all, with one insignificant exception, belongs to the

English empire; only Brittany is not ours; we have Ireland, the Scotch Highlands, Wales, the Isle of Man, Cornwall. They are a part of ourselves, we are deeply interested in knowing them, they are deeply interested in being known by us; and yet in the great and rich universities of this great and rich country there is no chair of Celtic, there is no study or teaching of Celtic matters; those who want them must go abroad for them. It is neither right nor reasonable that this should be so. Ireland has had in the last half century a band of Celtic students—a band with which death, alas! has of late been busy—from whence Oxford or Cambridge might have taken an admirable professor of Celtic; and with the authority of a university chair, a great Celtic scholar, on a subject little known, and where all would have readily deferred to him, might have by this time doubled our facilities for knowing the Celt, by procuring for this country Celtic documents which were inaccessible here, and preventing the dispersion of others which were accessible. It is not much that the English Government does for science or literature; but if Eugene O'Curry, from a chair of Celtic at Oxford, had appealed to the Government to get him copies or the originals of the Celtic treasures in the Burgundian Library at Brussels, or in the library of St. Isidore's College at Rome, even the English Government could not well have refused him. The invaluable Irish manuscripts in the Stowe Library the late Sir Robert Peel proposed, in 1849, to buy for the British Museum; Lord Macaulay, one of the trustees of the Museum, declared, with the confident shallowness which makes him so admired by public speakers and leading-article writers, and so intolerable to all

searchers for truth, that he saw nothing in the whole collection worth purchasing for the Museum, except the correspondence of Lord Melville on the American war. That is to say, this correspondence of Lord Melville's was the only thing in the collection about which Lord Macaulay himself knew or cared. Perhaps an Oxford or Cambridge professor of Celtic might have been allowed to make his voice heard, on a matter of Celtic manuscripts, even against Lord Macaulay. The manuscripts were bought by Lord Ashburnham, who keeps them shut up, and will let no one consult them (at least up to the date when O'Curry published his *Lectures* he did so), "for fear an actual acquaintance with their contents should decrease their value as matter of curiosity at some future transfer or sale." Who knows? Perhaps an Oxford professor of Celtic might have touched the flinty heart of Lord Ashburnham.

At this moment, when the narrow Philistinism which has long had things its own way in England, is showing its natural fruits, and we are beginning to feel ashamed, and uneasy, and alarmed at it; now, when we are becoming aware that we have sacrificed to Philistinism culture, and insight, and dignity, and acceptance, and weight among the nations, and hold on events that deeply concern us, and control of the future, and yet that it cannot even give us the fool's paradise it promised us, but is apt to break down, and to leave us with Mr. Roebuck's and Mr. Lowe's laudations of our matchless happiness, and the largest circulation in the world assured to the *Daily Telegraph*, for our only comfort; at such a moment it needs some moderation not to be attacking Philistinism by storm, but to mine it

through such gradual means as the slow approaches of culture, and the introduction of chairs of Celtic. But the hard unintelligence, which is just now our bane, cannot be conquered by storm; it must be supplied and reduced by culture, by a growth in the variety, fulness, and sweetness of our spiritual life; and this end can only be reached by studying things that are outside of ourselves, and by studying them disinterestedly. Let us reunite ourselves with our better mind and with the world through science; and let it be one of our angelic revenges on the Philistines, who among their other sins are the guilty authors of Fenianism, to found at Oxford a chair of Celtic, and to send, through the gentle ministration of science, a message of peace to Ireland.

PROSE MISCELLANIES

DANTE AND BEATRICE[1]

THOSE critics who allegorise the *Divine Comedy*, who exaggerate, or, rather, who mistake the supersensual element in Dante's work, who reduce to nothing the sensible and human element, are hardly worth refuting. They know nothing of the necessary laws under which poetic genius works, of the inevitable conditions under which the creations of poetry are produced. But, in their turn, those other critics err hardly less widely, who exaggerate, or, rather, who mistake the human and real element in Dante's poem; who see, in such a passion as that of Dante for Beatrice, an affection belonging to the sphere of actual domestic life, fitted to sustain the wear and tear of our ordinary daily existence. Into the error of these second critics an accomplished recent translator of Dante, Mr. Theodore Martin, seems to me to have fallen. He has ever present to his mind, when he speaks of the Beatrice whom Dante adored, Wordsworth's picture of

> The perfect woman, nobly planned
> To warm, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel light.

He is ever quoting these lines in connection with Dante's Beatrice; ever assimilating to this picture Beatrice as Dante conceived her: ever attributing to Dante's passion a character identical with that of the affection which Wordsworth, in the poem from which these lines are taken, meant to portray. The affection here portrayed by Wordsworth is, I grant, a substantial human affection, inhabiting the domain of real life, at the same time that it is poetical and beautiful. But in order to give this flesh-and-blood character to Dante's passion for Beatrice, what a task has Mr. Martin to perform! how much is he obliged to imagine! how much to shut his eyes to, or to disbelieve! Not perceiving that the vital impulse of

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, May 1863.

Dante's soul is towards reverie and spiritual vision; that the task Dante sets himself is not the task of reconciling poetry and reality, of giving to each its due part, of supplementing the one by the other; but the task of sacrificing the world to the spirit, of making the spirit all in all, of effacing the world in presence of the spirit—Mr. Martin seeks to find a Dante admirable and complete in the life of the world as well as in the life of the spirit; and when he cannot find him, he invents him. Dante saw the world, and used in his poetry what he had seen; for he was a born artist. But he was essentially aloof from the world, and not complete in the life of the world; for he was a born spiritualist and solitary. Keeping in our minds this, his double character, we may seize the exact truth as to his relations with Beatrice, and steer a right course between the error of those who deliteralise them too much, on the one hand, and that of those who literalise them too much, on the other.

The *Divine Comedy*, I have already said, is no allegory, and Beatrice no mere personification of theology. Mr. Martin is quite right in saying that Beatrice is the Beatrice whom men turned round to gaze at in the streets of Florence; that she is no "allegorical phantom," no "fiction purely ideal." He is quite right in saying that Dante "worships no phantoms," that his passion for Beatrice was a real passion, and that his love-poetry does not deal "in the attributes of celestial charms." He was an artist —one of the greatest artists; and art abhors what is vague, hollow, and impalpable.

Enough to make this fully manifest we have in the *Vita Nuova*. Dante there records how, a boy of ten, he first saw Beatrice, a girl of nine, dressed in crimson; how, a second time, he saw her, nine years later, passing along the street, dressed in white, between two ladies older than herself, and how she saluted him. He records how afterwards she once denied him her salutation; he records the profound impression which, at her father's death, the grief and beauty of Beatrice made on all those who visited her; he records his meeting with her at a party after her marriage, his emotion, and how some ladies present, ob-

serving his emotion, " made a mock of him to that most gentle being;" he records her death, and how, a year afterwards, some gentleman found him, on the anniversary of her death, " sketching an angel on his tablets." He tells us how, a little later, he had a vision of the dead Beatrice " arrayed in the same crimson robe in which she had originally appeared to my eyes, and she seemed as youthful as on the day I saw her first." He mentions how, one day, the sight of some pilgrims passing along a particular street in Florence brought to his mind the thought that perhaps these pilgrims, coming from a far country, had never even heard the name of her who filled his thoughts so entirely. And even in the *Divine Comedy*, composed many years afterwards, and treating of the glorified Beatrice only, one distinct trait of the earthly Beatrice is still preserved—her smile; the *santo riso* of the *Purgatory*, the *dolce riso* of the *Paradise*.

Yes, undoubtedly there was a real Beatrice, whom Dante had seen living and moving before him, and for whom he had felt a passion. This basis of fact and reality he took from the life of the outward world: this basis was indispensable to him, for he was an artist.

But this basis was enough for him as an artist; to have seen Beatrice two or three times, to have spoken to her two or three times, to have felt her beauty, her charm; to have had the emotion of her marriage, her death—this was enough. Art requires a basis of fact, but it also desires to treat this basis of fact with the utmost freedom; and this desire for the freest handling of its object is even thwarted when its object is too near, and too real. To have had his relations with Beatrice more positive, intimate, and prolonged, to have had an affection for her into which there entered more of the life of this world, would have even somewhat impeded, one may say, Dante's free use of these relations for the purpose of art. And the artist nature in him was in little danger of being thus impeded; for he was a born solitary.

Thus the conditions of art do not make it necessary that Dante's relations with Beatrice should have been more close and real than the *Vita Nuova* represents them; and

the conditions of Dante's own nature do not make it probable. Not the less do such admirers of the poet as Mr. Martin—misconceiving the essential characteristic of chivalrous passion in general, and of Dante's divinisation of Beatrice in particular, misled by imagining this "worship for woman," as they call it, to be something which it was not, something involving modern relations in social life between the two sexes—insist upon making out of Dante's adoration of Beatrice a substantial modern love-story, and of arranging Dante's real life so as to turn it into the proper sort of real life for a "worshipper of woman" to lead. The few real incidents of Dante's passion, enumerated in the *Vita Nuova*, sufficient to give to his great poem the basis which it required, are far too scanty to give to such a love-story as this the basis which it requires; therefore they must be developed and amplified. Beatrice was a living woman, and Dante had seen her; but she must become

> The creature not too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food,

of Wordsworth's poem: she must become "pure flesh and blood—beautiful, yet substantial," and "moulded of that noble humanity wherewith Heaven blesses, not unfrequently, our common earth." Dante had saluted Beatrice, had spoken to her; but this is not enough: he has surely omitted to "record particulars:" it is "scarcely credible that he should not have found an opportunity of directly declaring his attachment;" for "in position, education, and appearance he was a man worth any woman," and his face "at that time of his life must have been eminently engaging." Therefore "it seems strange that his love should not have found its issue in marriage;" for "he loved Beatrice as a man loves, and with the passion that naturally perseveres to the possession of its mistress."

However, his love did ***not*** find its issue in marriage. Beatrice married Messer Simone dei Bardi, to whom, says Mr. Martin, "her hand had been, perhaps lightly or to please her parents, pledged, in ignorance of the deep and noble passion which she had inspired in the young poet's

heart." But she certainly could not "have been insensible to his profound tenderness and passion;" although whether "she knew of it before her marriage," and whether "she, either then or afterwards, gave it her countenance and approval, and returned it in any way, and in what degree"—questions which, Mr. Martin says, "naturally suggest themselves"—are, he confesses, questions for solving which "the materials are most scanty and unsatisfactory." "Unquestionably," he adds, "it startles and grieves us to find Beatrice taking part with her friends in laughing at Dante when he was overcome at first meeting her after her marriage." But there may, he thinks, "have been causes for this—causes for which, in justice to her, allowance must be made, even as we see that Dante made it." Then, again, as to Messer Simone dei Bardi's feelings about this attachment of Dante to his wife. "It is true," says Mr. Martin, "that we have no direct information on this point;" but "the love of Dante was of an order too pure and noble to occasion distrust, even if the purity of Beatrice had not placed her above suspicion;" but Dante "did what only a great and manly nature could have done—he triumphed over his pain; he uttered no complaint; his regrets were buried within his own heart." "At the same time," Mr. Martin thinks, "it is contrary to human nature that a love unfed by any tokens of favour should retain all its original force; and without wrong either to Beatrice or Dante, we may conclude that an understanding was come to between them, which in some measure soothed his heart, if it did not satisfy it." And "sooner or later, before Beatrice died, we cannot doubt that there came a day when words passed between them which helped to reconcile Dante to the doom that severed her from his side during her all too brief sojourn on earth, when the pent-up heart of the poet swept down the barriers within which it had so long struggled, and he

> Caught up the whole of love, and utter'd it,
> Then bade adieu for ever,

if not to her, yet to all those words which it was no longer meet should be spoken to another's wife."

But Dante married, as well as Beatrice; and so Dante's married life has to be *arranged* also. "It is," says Mr. Martin, "only those who have observed little of human nature, or of their own hearts, who will think that Dante's marriage with Gemma Donati argues against the depth of sincerity of his first love. Why should he not have sought the solace and the support of a generous woman's nature, who, knowing all the truth, was yet content with such affection as he was able to bring to a second love? Nor was that necessarily small. Ardent and affectionate as his nature was, the sympathies of such a woman must have elicited from him a satisfactory response; while, at the same time, without prejudice to the wife's claim on his regard, he might entertain his heavenward dream of the departed Beatrice." The tradition is, however, that Dante did not live happily with his wife; and some have thought that he means to cast a disparaging reflection on his marriage in a passage of the *Purgatory*. I need not say that this sort of thing would never do for Mr. Martin's hero—that hero who can do nothing "inconsistent with the purest respect to her who had been the wedded wife of another, on the one hand, or with his regard for the mother of his children, on the other." Accordingly, "are we to assume," Mr. Martin cries, "that the woman who gave herself to him in the full knowledge that she was not the bride of his imagination, was not regarded by him with the esteem which her devotion was calculated to inspire?" It is quite impossible. "Dante was a true-hearted gentleman, and could never have spoken slightingly of her on whose breast he had found comfort amid many a sorrow, and who had borne to him a numerous progeny—the last a Beatrice." Donna Gemma was a "generous and devoted woman," and she and Dante "thoroughly understood each other."

All this has, as applied to real personages, the grave defect of being entirely of Mr. Martin's own imagining. But it has a still graver defect, I think, as applied to Dante, in being so singularly inappropriate to his object. The grand, impracticable Solitary, with keen senses and ardent passions—for nature had made him an artist, and art must

be, as Milton says, "sensuous and impassioned"—but with an irresistible bent to the inward life, the life of imagination, vision, and ecstasy; with an inherent impatience of the outward life, the life of distraction, jostling, mutual concession; this man "of a humour which made him hard to get on with," says Petrarch; "melancholy and pensive," says Boccaccio; "by nature abstracted and taciturn, seldom speaking unless he was questioned, and often so absorbed in his own reflections that he did not hear the questions which were put to him;" who could not live with the Florentines, who could not live with Gemma Donati, who could not live with Can Grande della Scala; this lover of Beatrice, but of Beatrice a vision of his youth, hardly at all in contact with him in actual life, vanished from him soon, with whom his imagination could deal freely, whom he could divinise into a fit object for the spiritual longing which filled him—this Dante is transformed, in Mr. Martin's hands, into the hero of a sentimental, but strictly virtuous, novel! To make out Dante to have been eminent for a wise, complete conduct of his outward life, seems to me as unimportant as it is impossible. I can quite believe the tradition which represents him as not having lived happily with his wife, and attributes her not having joined him in his exile to this cause. I can even believe, without difficulty, an assertion of Boccaccio which excites Mr. Martin's indignation, that Dante's conduct, even in mature life, was at times exceedingly irregular. We know how the followers of the spiritual life tend to be antinomian in what belongs to the outward life: they do not attach much importance to such irregularity themselves; it is their fault, as complete men, that they do not; it is the fault of the spiritual life, as a complete life, that it allows this tendency: by dint of despising the outward life, it loses the control of this life, and of itself when in contact with it. My present business, however, is not to praise or blame Dante's practical conduct of his life, but to make clear his peculiar mental and spiritual condition. This, I say, disposed him to absorb himself in the inner life, wholly to humble and efface before this the outward life. We may see this in

the passage of the *Purgatory* where he makes Beatrice reprove him for his backslidings after she, his visible symbol of spiritual perfection, had vanished from his eyes.

"For a while"—she says of him to the "pious substances," the angels—"for a while with my countenance I upheld him; showing to him my youthful eyes, with me I led him, turned towards the right way.

"Soon as I came on the threshold of my second age, and changed my life, this man took himself from me and gave himself to others.

"When that I had mounted from flesh to spirit, and beauty and spirit were increased unto me, I was to him less dear and less acceptable.

"He turned his steps to go in a way not true, pursuing after false images of good, which fulfil nothing of the promises which they give.

"Neither availed it me that I obtained inspirations to be granted me, whereby, both in dream and otherwise, I called him back; so little heed paid he to them.

"So deep he fell, that, for his salvation all means came short, except to show him the people of perdition.

"The high decree of God would be broken, could Lethe be passed, and that so fair aliment tasted, without some scot paid of repentance, which pours forth tears."

Here, indeed, and in a somewhat similar passage of the next canto, Mr. Martin thinks that the "obvious allusion" is to certain moral shortcomings, occasional slips, of which (though he treats Boccaccio's imputation as monstrous and incredible) "Dante, with his strong and ardent passions, having, like meaner men, to fight the perennial conflict between flesh and spirit," had sometimes, he supposes, been guilty. An Italian commentator gives at least as true an interpretation of these passages when he says that "in them Dante makes Beatrice, as the representative of theology, lament that he should have left the study of divinity—in which, by the grace of Heaven, he might have attained admirable proficiency—to immerse himself in civil affairs with the parties of Florence." But the real truth is, that all the life of the world, its pleasures, its business, its parties, its politics, all is alike hollow and miserable to Dante in comparison with the inward life, the ecstasy of the divine vision; every way which does not lead straight towards this is for him a *via non vera;* every good thing but this is for him a false image of good, fulfilling none of the promises which it gives;

for the excellency of the knowledge of this he counts all things but loss. Beatrice leads him to this; herself symbolises for him the ineffable beauty and purity for which he longs. Even to Dante at twenty-one, when he yet sees the living Beatrice with his eyes, she already symbolises this for him, she is already not the "creature not too bright and good" of Wordsworth, but a spirit far more than a woman; to Dante at twenty-five composing the *Vita Nuova* she is still more a spirit; to Dante at fifty, when his character has taken his bent, when his genius is come to its perfection, when he is composing his immortal poem, she is a spirit altogether.

DEAN STANLEY ON THE JEWISH CHURCH[1]

HERE is a book on religious matters, which, meant for all the world to read, fulfils the indispensable duty of edifying at the same time that it informs. Here is a clergyman, who, looking at the Bible, sees its contents in their right proportion, and gives to each matter its due prominence. Here is an inquirer, who, treating Scripture history with a perfectly free spirit—falsifying nothing, sophisticating nothing—treats it so that his freedom leaves the sacred power of that history inviolate. Who that had been reproached with denying to an honest clergyman freedom to speak the truth, who that had been misrepresented as wishing to make religious truth the property of an aristocratic few, while to the multitude is thrown the sop of any convenient fiction, could desire a better opportunity than Dr. Stanley's book affords for showing what, in religious matters, is the true freedom of a religious speaker, and what the true demand and true right of his hearers?

His hearers are the many; those who prosecute the religious life, or those who need to prosecute it. All these come to him with certain demands in virtue of certain needs. There remain a few of mankind who do not come to him with these demands, or acknowledge these needs. Mr. Maurice (whom I name with gratitude and respect) says, in a remarkable letter, that I thus assert them to be without these needs. By no means: that is a matter which literary criticism does not try. But it sees that a very few of mankind aspire after a life which is not the life after which the vast majority aspire, and to help them to which the vast majority seek the aid of religion. It sees that the ideal life—the *summum bonum* for a born thinker, for a philosopher like Parmenides, or Spinoza, or Hegel—is an eternal series of intellectual acts. It sees that this life treats all things, religion included, with

[1] *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1863.

entire freedom as subject-matter for thought, as elements in a vast movement of speculation. The few who live this life stand apart, and have an existence separate from that of the mass of mankind; they address an imaginary audience of their mates; the region which they inhabit is the laboratory wherein are fashioned the new intellectual ideas which, from time to time, take their place in the world. Are these few justified, in the sight of God, in so living? That is a question which literary criticism must not attempt to answer. But such is the worth of intellect, such the benefit which it procures for man, that criticism, itself the creation of intellect, cannot but recognise this purely intellectual life, when really followed, as justified so far as the jurisdiction of criticism extends, and even admirable. Those they regard as really following it, who show the power of mind to animate and carry forward the intellectual movement in which it consists. No doubt, many boast of living this life, of inhabiting this purely intellectual region, who cannot really breathe its air: they vainly profess themselves able to live by thought alone, and to dispense with religion: the life of the many, and not the life of the few, would have been the right one for them. They follow the life of the few at their own peril. No doubt the rich and the great, unsoftened by suffering, hardened by enjoyment, craving after novelty, imagining that they see a distinction in the freedom of mind with which the born thinker treats all things, and believing that all distinctions naturally belong to them, have in every age been prone to treat religion as something which the multitude wanted, but they themselves did not —to affect free-thinking as a kind of aristocratic privilege; while, in fact, for any real mental or moral life at all, their frivolity entirely disqualified them. They, too, profess the life of the few at their own peril. But the few do really remain, whose life, whose ideal, whose demand, is thought, and thought only: to the communications (however bold) of these few with one another through the ages, criticism assigns the right of passing freely.

But the world of the few—the world of speculative life —is not the world of the many, the world of religious life;

the thoughts of the former cannot properly be transferred to the latter, cannot be called true in the latter, except on certain conditions. It is not for literary criticism to set forth adequately the religious life; yet what, even as criticism, it sees of this life, it may say. Religious life resides not in an incessant movement of ideas, but in a feeling which attaches itself to certain fixed objects. The religious life of Christendom has thus attached itself to the acts, and words, and death of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels and expounded in the Epistles of the New Testament; and to the main histories, the prophecies and the hymns of the Old Testament. In relation to these objects, it has adopted certain intellectual ideas; such are, ideas respecting the being of God, the laws of nature, the freedom of human will, the character of prophecy, the character of inspiration. But its essence, the essence of Christian life, consists in the ardour, the love, the self-renouncement, the ineffable aspiration with which it throws itself upon the objects of its attachment themselves, not in the intellectual ideas which it holds in relation to them. These ideas belong to another sphere, the sphere of speculative life, of intellect, of pure thought; transplanted into the sphere of religious life, they have no meaning in them, no vitality, no truth, unless they adjust themselves to the conditions of that life, unless they allow it to pursue its course freely. The moment this is forgotten, the moment in the sphere of the religious life undue prominence is given to the intellectual ideas which are here but accessories, the moment the first place is not given to the emotion which is here the principle, that moment the essence of the religious life is violated: confusion and falsehood are introduced into its sphere. And, if not only is undue prominence in this sphere given to intellectual ideas, but these ideas are so presented as in themselves violently to jar with the religious feeling, then the confusion is a thousand times worse confounded, the falsehood a thousand times more glaring.

"*The earth moves*," said Galileo, speaking as a philosopher in the sphere of pure thought, in which ideas have an absolute value; and he said the truth; he was a great

thinker because he perceived this truth; he was a great man because he asserted it in spite of persecution. It was the theologians, insisting upon transplanting his idea into the world of theology, and placing it in a false connexion there, who were guilty of folly. But if Galileo himself, quitting the sphere of mathematics, coming into the sphere of religion, had placed this thesis of his in juxtaposition with the Book of Joshua, had applied it so as to impair the value of the Book of Joshua for the religious life of Christendom, to make that book regarded as a tissue of fictions, for which no blame indeed attached to Joshua, because he never meant it for anything else, then Galileo would have himself placed his idea in a false connexion, and would have deserved censure: his "*the earth moves*" in spite of its absolute truth, would have become a falsehood. Spinoza, again, speaking as a pure thinker to pure thinkers, not concerning himself whether what he said impaired or confirmed the power and virtue of the Bible for the actual religious life of Christendom, but pursuing a speculative demonstration, said: "The Bible contains much that is mere history, and, like all history, sometimes true, sometimes false." But we must bear in mind that Spinoza did not promulgate this thesis in immediate connexion with the religious life of his times, but as a speculative idea: he uttered it not as a religious teacher, but as an independent philosopher; and he left it, as Galileo left his, to filter down gradually (if true) into the common thought of mankind, and to adjust itself, through other agency than his, to their religious life. The Bishop of Natal does not speak as an independent philosopher, as a pure thinker; if he did, and if he spoke with power in this capacity, literary criticism would, I have already said, have no right to condemn him. But he speaks actually and avowedly, as by virtue of his office he was almost inevitably constrained to speak, as a religious teacher to the religious world. Well, then, any intellectual idea which, speaking in this capacity, he promulgates, he is bound to place in its right connexion with the religious life, he is bound to make harmonise with that life, he is bound not to magnify to the detriment of that

life: else, in the sphere of that life, it is false. He takes an intellectual idea, we will say, which is true; the idea that Mr. Burgon's proposition, "Every letter of the Bible is the direct utterance of the Most High," is false. And how does he apply this idea in connexion with the religious life? He gives to it the most excessive, the most exaggerated prominence; so much so, that hardly in one page out of twenty does he suffer his reader to recollect that the religious life exists out of connexion with this idea, that it is, in truth, wholly independent of it. And by way of adjusting this idea to the feeling of the religious reader of the Bible, he puts it thus:—"In writing the story of the Exodus from the ancient legends of his people, the Scripture writer may have had no more consciousness of doing wrong, or of practising historical deception, than Homer had, or any of the early Roman annalists." Theological criticism censures this language as unorthodox, irreverent: literary criticism censures it as *false*. Its employer precisely does what I have imagined Galileo doing: he misemploys a true idea so as to deprive it of all truth. It is a thousand times truer to say that the Book of Exodus is a sacred book, an inspired history, than to say that it is fiction, not culpable because no deception was intended, because its author worked in the same free poetic spirit as the creator of the Isle of Calypso and the Garden of Alcinous.

It is one of the hardest tasks in the world to make new intellectual ideas harmonise truly with the religious life, to place them in their right light for that life. The moments in which such a change is accomplished are epochs in religious history; the men through whose instrumentality it is accomplished are great religious reformers. The greatness of these men does not consist in their having these new ideas, in their originating them. The ideas are in the world; they come originally from the sphere of pure thought; they are put into circulation by the spirit of the time. The greatness of a religious reformer consists in his reconciling them with the religious life, in his starting this life upon a fresh period in company with them. No such religious reformer for the present age has yet shown

himself. Till he appears, the true religious teacher is he who, not yet reconciling all things, at least esteems things still in their due order, and makes his hearers so esteem them; who, shutting his mind against no ideas brought by the spirit of his time, sets these ideas, in the sphere of the religious life, in their right prominence, and still puts that first which is first; who, under the pressure of new thoughts, keeps the centre of the religious life where it should be. The best distinction of Dr. Stanley's lectures is that in them he shows himself such a teacher. Others will praise them, and deservedly praise them, for their eloquence, their varied information; for enabling us to give such form and substance to our impressions from Bible history. To me they seem admirable, chiefly by the clear perception which they exhibit of a religious teacher's true business in dealing with the Bible. Dr. Stanley speaks of the Bible to the religious world, and he speaks of it so as to maintain the sense of the divine virtue of the Bible unimpaired, so as to bring out this sense more fully. He speaks of the deliverance of the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. He does not dilate upon the difficulty of understanding how the Israelites should have departed "harnessed;" but he points out how they are "the only nation in ancient or modern times, which, throwing off the yoke of slavery, claims no merit, no victory of its own: there is no Marathon, no Regillus, no Tours, no Morgarten. All is from above, nothing from themselves." He mentions the difficulty of "conceiving the migration of a whole nation under such circumstances" as those of the Israelites, the proposal "to reduce the numbers of the text from 600,000 to 600 armed men;" he mentions the difficulty of determining the exact place of the passage of the Red Sea; but he quickly "dismisses these considerations to fix the mind on the essential features of this great deliverance"—on the Almighty, "through the dark and terrible night, with the enemy pressing close behind and the driving seas on either side, leading his people like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron;" His people carrying with them from that night "the abiding impression that this deliverance —the first and greatest in their history—was effected not

by their own power, but by the power of God." He tells the reader how, "with regard to all the topographical details of the Israelite journey, we are still in the condition of discoverers;" but, instead of impressing upon him as an inference from this that the Bible narrative is a creation such as the Iliad and Odyssey, he reminds him, with truth, how "suspense as to the exact details of form and locality is the most fitting approach for the consideration of the presence of Him who has made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about Him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover them." Everywhere Dr. Stanley thus seeks to give its due prominence to that for which the religious life really values the Bible. If "the Jewish religion is characterised in an eminent degree by the dimness of its conception of a future life," Dr. Stanley does not find here, like Warburton, matter for a baffling contrast between Jewish and pagan religion, but he finds fresh proof of the grand edifying fact of Jewish history, "the consciousness of the living, actual presence of God himself —a truth, in the limited conceptions of this youthful nation, too vast to admit of any rival truth, however precious." He speaks of the call of Samuel. What he finds to dwell on in this call is not the exact nature of the voice that called Samuel, on which Spinoza speculates so curiously; it is the image of "childlike, devoted, continuous goodness," which Samuel's childhood brings before us; the type which Samuel offers "of holiness, of growth, of a new creation without conversion." He speaks of the Prophets, and he avows that "the Bible recognises 'revelation' and 'inspiration' outside the circle of the chosen people;" but he makes it his business not to reduce, in virtue of this avowal, the greatness and significance of Hebrew prophecy, but to set that greatness and significance in clearer light than ever. To the greatness and significance of what he calls "the negative side" of that prophecy— its attacks on the falsehoods and superstitions which endeavoured to take the place of God—he does due justice; but he reserves the chief prominence for its "positive side —the assertion of the spirituality, the morality of God, His justice, His goodness, His love." Everywhere he

keeps in mind the purpose for which the religious life seeks the Bible—to be enlarged and strengthened, not to be straitened and perplexed. He seizes a truth of criticism when he says that the Bible narrative, whatever inaccuracies of numbers the Oriental tendency to amplification may have introduced into it, remains a "substantially historical" work—not a work like Homer's poems; but to this proposition, which, merely so stated, is a truth of criticism and nothing more, he assigns no undue prominence: he knows that a mere truth of criticism is not, as such, a truth for the religious life.

Dr. Stanley thus gives a lesson not only to the Bishop of Natal, but to the Bishop of Natal's adversaries. Many of these adversaries themselves exactly repeat the Bishop's error in this, that they give a wholly undue prominence, in connexion with the religious life, to certain intellectual propositions, on which the essence and vitality of the religious life in no way depends. The Bishop devotes a volume to the exhibition of such propositions, and he is censurable because, addressing the religious world, he exhibits his propositions so as to confuse the religious life by them, not to strengthen it. He seems to have so confused it in many of his hearers that they, like himself, have forgotten in what it really consists. Puzzled by the Bishop's sums, terrified at the conclusion he draws from them, they, in their bewilderment, seek for safety in attacking the sums themselves, instead of putting them on one side as irrelevant, and rejecting the conclusion deduced from them as untrue. "Here is a Bishop," many of Dr. Stanley's brethren are now crying in all parts of England—"here is a Bishop who has learnt among the Zulus that only a certain number of people can stand in a doorway at once, and that no man can eat eighty-eight pigeons a day, and who tells us, as a consequence, that the Pentateuch is all fiction, which, however, the author may very likely have composed without meaning to do wrong, and as a work of poetry, like Homer's."

"Well," one can imagine Dr. Stanley answering them, "you cannot think that!" "No," they reply; "and yet the Bishop's sums puzzle us, and we want them disproved.

And powerful answers, we know, are preparing. An adversary worthy of the Bishop will soon appear—

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!

He, when he comes, will make mince-meat of the Bishop's calculations. Those great truths, so necessary to our salvation, which the Bishop assails, will at his hands receive all the strengthening they deserve. He will prove to demonstration that any number of persons can stand in the same doorway at once, and that one man can eat eighty-eight pigeons a day with ease." "Compose yourselves," says Dr. Stanley: "he cannot prove this." "What," cry his terrified interlocutors, "he cannot! In that case we may as well shut up our Bibles, and read Homer and the first books of Livy!" "Compose yourselves," says Dr. Stanley again: "it is not so. Even if the Bishop's sums are right, they do not prove that the Bible narrative is to be classed with the Iliad and the Legends of Rome. Even if you prove them wrong, your success does not bring you a step nearer to that which you go to the Bible to seek. Carry your achievements of this kind to the Statistical Society, to the Geographical Society, to the Ethnological Society. They have no vital interest for the religious reader of the Bible. The heart of the Bible is not there."

Just because Dr. Stanley has comprehended this, and, in a book addressed to the religious world, makes us feel that he has comprehended it, his book is excellent and salutary. I praise it for the very reason for which some critics find fault with it—for not giving prominence, in speaking of the Bible, to matters with which the real virtue of the Bible is not bound up. "The book," a critic complains, "contains no solution of the difficulties which the history of the period traversed presents in the Bible. The oracle is dumb in the very places where many would wish it to speak. This must lessen Dr. Stanley's influence in the cause of Biblical science. The present time needs bold men, prepared to give utterance to their deepest thoughts." And which are a man's deepest thoughts I should like to know: his thoughts whether it was 215

years, or 430, or 1000 that the Israelites sojourned in Egypt—which question the critic complains of Dr. Stanley for saying that it is needless to discuss in detail—or his thoughts on the moral lesson to be drawn from the story of the Israelites' deliverance? And which is the true science of the Bible—that which helps men to follow the cardinal injunction of the Bible, to be "transformed by the renewing of their mind, that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"—or that which helps them to "settle the vexed question of the precise time when the Book of Deuteronomy assumed its present form?"—that which elaborates an octavo volume on the arithmetical difficulties of the Bible, with the conclusion that the Bible is as unhistorical as Homer's poetry, or that which makes us feel that "these difficulties melt away before the simple pathos and lofty spirit of the Bible itself?" Such critics as this critic of Dr. Stanley are those who commend the Bishop of Natal for "speaking the truth," who say that "liberals of every shade of opinion" are indignant with me for rebuking him. Ah! these liberals!—the power for good they have had, and lost: the power for good they will yet again have, and yet again lose! Eternal bondsmen of phrases and catchwords, will they never arrive at the heart of any matter, but always keep muttering round it their silly shibboleths like an incantation? There is truth of science and truth of religion: truth of science does not become truth of religion until it is made to harmonise with it. Applied as the laws of nature are applied in the "Essays and Reviews" applied as arithmetical calculations are applied in the Bishop of Natal's work, truths of science, even supposing them to be such, lose their truth, and the utterer of them is not a "fearless speaker of truth," but, at best, a blunderer. "Allowing two feet in width for each full-grown man, nine men could just have stood in front of the Tabernacle." "A priest could not have eaten, daily, eighty-eight pigeons for his own portion, 'in the most holy place.'" And as a conclusion from all this: "In writing the story of the Exodus from the ancient legends of his people, the Scripture-writer may have had no more consciousness of

doing wrong, or of practising historical deception, than Homer had, or any of the early Roman annalists." Heaven and earth, what a gospel! Is it this which a "fearless speaker of truth" must "burst" if he cannot utter? Is this a message which it is woe to him if he does not preach?—this a testimony which he is straitened till he can deliver?

I am told that the Bishop of Natal explains to those who do not know it, that the Pentateuch is not to be read as an authentic history, but as a narrative full of divine instruction in morals and religion: I wish to lay aside all ridicule, into which literary criticism too readily falls, while I express my unfeigned conviction that in his own heart the Bishop of Natal honestly believes this, and that he originally meant to convey this to his readers. But I censure his book because it entirely fails to convey this. I censure it, because while it impresses strongly on the reader that "the Pentateuch is not to be read as an authentic narrative," it so entirely fails to make him feel that it is "a narrative full of divine instruction in morals and religion." I censure it, because, addressed to the religious world, it puts the non-essential part of the Bible so prominent, and the essential so much in the background, and, having established this false proportion, holds such language about the Bible in consequence of it, that, instead of serving the religious life it confuses it. I do not blame the Bishop of Natal's doctrine for its novelty or heterodoxy—literary criticism takes no account of a doctrine's novelty or heterodoxy; I said expressly that Mr. Jowett's Essay was, for literary criticism, justified by its unction; I said that the Bishop of Natal's book was censurable, because, proclaiming what it did, *it proclaimed no more;* because, not taking rank as a book of pure speculation, inevitably taking rank as a religious book for the religious world, for the great majority of mankind, it treated its subject unedifyingly. Address what doctrine you like to the religious world, be as unorthodox as you will, literary criticism has no authority to blame you: only, if your doctrine is evidently not adapted to the needs of the religious life—if, as you present it, it tends to confound

that life rather than to strengthen it, literary criticism has the right to check you; for it at once perceives that your doctrine, as you present it, is false. Was it, nevertheless, your duty to put forth that doctrine, since you believed it to be true? The honoured authority of the Archbishop of Dublin is invoked to decide that it was. Which duty comes first for a man—the duty of proclaiming an inadequate idea, or the duty of making an inadequate idea adequate? But this difficult question we need not resolve: it is enough that, if it is a man's duty to announce even his inadequate ideas, it is the duty of criticism to tell him that they are inadequate.

But, again, it is said that the Bishop of Natal's book will, in the end, have a good effect, by loosening the superstitious attachment with which the mass of the English religious world clings to the letter of the Bible, and that it deserves from criticism indulgence on this ground. I cannot tell what may, in the end, be the effect of the Bishop of Natal's book upon the religious life of this country. Its natural immediate effect may be seen by any one who will take the trouble of looking at a newspaper called *Public Opinion*, in which the Bishop's book is the theme of a great continuous correspondence. There, week after week, the critical genius of our nation discovers itself in captivating nudity; and there, in the letters of a terrible athlete of Reason, who signs himself "Eagle-Eye," the natural immediate effect of the Bishop's book may be observed. Its natural ultimate effect would be, I think, to continue, in another form, the excessive care of the English religious world for that which is not of the real essence of the Bible: as this world has for years been prone to say, "We are the salt of the earth, because we believe that every syllable and letter of the Bible is the direct utterance of the Most High," so it would naturally, after imbibing the Bishop of Natal's influence, be inclined to say, "We are the salt of the earth, because we believe that the Pentateuch is unhistorical." Whether they believe the one or the other, what they should learn to say is: "We are unprofitable servants; the religious life is beyond." But, at all events, literary criticism, which

is the guardian of literary truth, must judge books according to their intrinsic merit and proximate natural effect, not according to their possible utility and remote contingent effect. If the Bishop of Natal's demonstrations ever produce a salutary effect upon the religious life of England, it will be after some one else, or he himself, has supplied the now missing power of edification: for literary criticism his book, as it at present stands, must always remain a censurable production.

The situation of a clergyman, active-minded as well as pious, is, I freely admit, at the present moment one of great difficulty. Intellectual ideas are not the essence of the religious life; still the religious life connects itself, as I have said, with certain intellectual ideas, and all intellectual ideas follow a development independent of the religious life. Goethe remarks somewhere how the *Zeit-Geist*, as he calls it, the Time-Spirit, irresistibly changes the ideas current in the world. When he was young, he says, the Time-Spirit had made every one disbelieve in the existence of a single Homer: when he was old, it was bearing every one to a belief in it. Intellectual ideas, which the majority of men take from the age in which they live, are the dominion of this Time-Spirit; not moral and spiritual life, which is original in each individual. In the Articles of the Church of England are exhibited the intellectual ideas with which the religious life of that Church, at the time of the Reformation, and almost to the present day, connected itself. They are the intellectual ideas of the English Reformers and of their time; they are liable to development and change. Insensibly the Time-Spirit brings to men's minds a consciousness that certain of these ideas have undergone such development, such change. For the laity, to whom the religious life of their National Church is the great matter, and who owe to that Church only the general adhesion of citizens to the Government under which they are born, this consciousness is not irksome as it is for the clergy, who, as ministers of the Church, undertake to become organs of the intellectual ideas of its formularies. As this consciousness becomes more and more distinct, it becomes more and

more irksome. One can almost fix the last period in which a clergyman, very speculative by the habit of his mind, or very sensible to the whispers of the Time-Spirit, can sincerely feel himself free and at ease in his position of a minister of the Church of England. The moment inevitably arrives when such a man feels himself in a false position. It is natural that he should try to defend his position, that he should long prefer defending his position to confessing it untenable, and demanding to have it changed. Still, in his own heart, he cannot but be dissatisfied with it. It is not good for him, not good for his usefulness, to be left in it. The sermons of Tauler and Wesley were not preached by men hampered by the consciousness of an unsound position. Even when a clergyman, charged full with modern ideas, manages by a miracle of address to go over the very ground most dangerous to him without professional ruin, and even to exhibit unction as he goes along, there is no reason to exult at the feat: he would probably have exhibited more unction still if he had not had to exhibit it upon the tight-rope. The time at last comes for the State, the collective nation, to intervene. Some reconstruction of the English Church, a reconstruction hardly less important than that which took place at the Reformation, is fast becoming inevitable. It will be a delicate, a most difficult task; and the reconstruction of the Protestant Churches of Germany offers an example of what is to be avoided rather than of what is to be followed.

Still, so divine, so indestructible is the power of Christianity—so immense the power of transformation afforded to it by its sublime maxim, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," that it will assuredly ever be able to adapt itself to new conditions, and, in connexion with intellectual ideas changed or developed, to enter upon successive stages of progress. It will even survive the handling of "liberals of every shade of opinion." But it will not do this by losing its essence, by becoming such a Christianity as these liberals imagine, the "Christianity not Mysterious" of Toland; a Christianity consisting of half-a-dozen intellectual propositions, and half-a-dozen moral rules deduced from them. It will do it by retaining

the religious life in all its depth and fulness in connexion with new intellectual ideas; and the latter will never have meaning for it until they have been harmonised with the former, and the religious teacher who presents the latter to it, without harmonising them with the former, will never have fulfilled his mission. The religious life existed in the Church of the Middle Ages, as it exists in the Churches of Protestantism; nay, what monument of that life have the Protestant Churches produced, which for its most essential qualities, its tenderness, its spirituality, its ineffable yearning, is comparable to the "Imitation?" The critical ideas of the sixteenth century broke up the Church of the Middle Ages, resting on the basis of a priesthood with supernatural power of interpreting the Bible. But Luther was a great religious reformer, not because he made himself the organ of these ideas, themselves negative, not because he shattered the idol of a mediatory priesthood, but because he reconciled these ideas with the religious life, because he made the religious life feel that a positive and fruitful conclusion was to be drawn from them—the conclusion that each man must "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling." Protestantism has formed the notion that every syllable and letter of the Bible is the direct utterance of the Most High. The critical ideas of our century are forcing Protestantism away from this proposition, untrue like the proposition that the Pope is infallible: but the religious reformer is not he who rivets our minds upon the untruth of this proposition, who bewilders the religious life by insisting on the intellectual blunder of which it has been guilty in entertaining it; he is the man who makes us feel the future which undoubtedly exists for the religious life in the absence of it.

Makes us all feel, not the multitude only. I am reproached with wishing to make free-thinking an aristocratic privilege, while a false religion is thrown to the multitude to keep it quiet; and in this country—where the multitude is, in the first place, particularly averse to being called the multitude, and in the second, by its natural spirit of honesty, particularly averse to all underhand, selfish scheming—such an imputation is readily snatched

up, and carries much odium with it. I will not seek to remove that odium by any flattery, by saying that I think we are all one enlightened public together. No, there *is* a multitude, a multitude made up out of all ranks: probably in no country—so much has our national life been carried on by means of parties, and so inevitably does party-spirit, in regarding all things, put the consideration of their intrinsic reason and truth second, and not first—is the multitude more unintelligent, more narrow-minded, and more passionate than in this. Perhaps in no country in the world is so much nonsense so firmly believed. But those on whose behalf I demand from a religious speaker edification are more than this multitude; and their cause and that of the multitude are one. They are all those who acknowledge the need of the religious life. The few whom literary criticism regards as exempt from all concern with edification are far fewer than is commonly supposed. Those whose life is all in thought, and to whom, therefore, literary criticism concedes the right of treating religion with absolute freedom, as pure matter for thought, are not a great class, but a few individuals. Let them think in peace, these sublime solitaries; they have a right to their liberty; Churches will never concede it to them; literary criticism will never deny it to them. From his austere isolation a born thinker like Spinoza cries with warning solemnity to the would-be thinker, what from his austere isolation a born artist like Michael Angelo cries to the would-be artist—"Canst thou drink of the cup that I drink of?" Those who persist in the thinker's life are far fewer even than those who persist in the artist's. Of the educated minority, far the greatest number retain their demand upon the religious life. They share, indeed, the culture of their time, they are curious to know the new ideas of their time; their own culture is advanced, in so far as those ideas are novel, striking, and just. This course they follow, whether they feel or not (what is certainly true), that this satisfaction of their curiosity, this culture of theirs, is not without its dangers to the religious life. Thus they go on being informed, gathering intellectual ideas at their own peril, minding, as

Marcus Aurelius reproached himself with too long minding, "life less than notion." But the moment they enter the sphere of religion, they too ask and need to be edified, not informed only. They inevitably, such is the law of the religious life, take the same attitude as the least instructed. The religious voice that speaks to them must have the tone of the spiritual world: the intellectual ideas presented to them must be made to blend with the religious life.

The world may not see this, but cannot a clergyman see it? Cannot he see that, speaking to the religious life, he may honestly be silent about matters which he cannot yet use to edification, and of which, therefore, the religious life does not want to hear? Does he not see that he is even bound to take account of the circumstances of his hearers, and that information which is only fruitless to the religious life of some of his hearers, may be worse than fruitless, confounding, to the religious life of others of them? Certainly, Christianity has not two doctrines, one for the few, another for the many; but as certainly, Christ adapted His teaching to the different stages of growth in His hearers, and for all of them adapted it to the needs of the religious life. He came to preach moral and spiritual truths; and for His purpose moral genius was of more avail than intellectual genius, St. Peter than Solomon. But the speculative few who stood outside of His teaching were not the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the narrow-minded, cruel-hearted religious professors of that day; the Sadducees were the "liberals of every shade of opinion." And who, then, were the thinking few of that time?—a student or two at Athens or Alexandria. That was the hour of the religious sense of the East; but the hour of the thought of the West, of Greek thought, was also to come. The religious sense had to ally itself with this, to make certain conditions with it, to be in certain ways inevitably modified by it. Now is the hour of the thought of the West. This thought has its apostles on every side, and we hear far more of its conquests than of the conquests of the religious sense. Still the religious life maintains its indefeasible claims, and in its own sphere inexorably refuses to be satisfied with the

new thought, to admit it to be of any truth and significance, until it has harmonised it with itself, until it has imparted to it its own divine power of refreshing souls. Some day the religious life will have harmonised all the new thought with itself, will be able to use it freely: but it cannot use it yet. And who has not rejoiced to be able, between the old idea, tenable no longer, which once connected itself with certain religious words, and the new idea, which has not yet connected itself with them, to rest for awhile in the healing virtue and beauty of the words themselves? The old popular notion of perpetual special interventions of Providence in the concerns of man is weak and erroneous; yet who has yet found, to define Providence for the religious life, words so adequate as the words of Isaiah—"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old?" The old popular notion of an incensed God appeased in His wrath against the helpless race of mankind by a bloody sacrifice, is barbarous and false; but what intellectual definition of the death of Christ has yet succeeded in placing it, for the religious life, in so true an aspect as the sublime ejaculation of the Litany: "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us!"

And you are masters in Israel, and know not these things; and you require a voice from the world of literature to tell them to you! Those who ask nothing better than to remain silent on such topics, who have to quit their own sphere to speak of them, who cannot touch them without being reminded that they survive those who touched them with far different power, you compel, in the mere interest of letters, of intelligence, of general culture, to proclaim truths which it was your function to have made familiar. And, when you have thus forced the very stones to cry out, and the dumb to speak, you call them singular because they know these truths, and arrogant because they declare them!

EDUCATION AND THE STATE

With many Englishmen, perhaps with the majority, it is a maxim that the State, the executive power, ought to be entrusted with no more means of action than those which it is impossible to withhold from it; that it neither would nor could make a safe use of any more extended liberty: would not, because it has in itself a natural instinct of despotism, which, if not jealously checked, would become outrageous: could not, because it is, in truth, not at all more enlightened, or fit to assume a lead, than the mass of this enlightened community. According to the long-cherished convictions of a great many, it is for the public interest that Government should be confined, as far as possible, to the bare and indispensable functions of a police officer and a revenue collector. It is to be always the mere delegated hand of the nation, never its originating head.

No sensible man will lightly go counter to an opinion firmly held by a great body of his countrymen. He will take for granted, that for any opinion which has taken deep root among a people so powerful, so successful, and so well worthy of respect as the people of this country, there certainly either are, or have been, good and sound reasons. He will venture to impugn such an opinion with real hesitation, and only when he thinks he perceives that the reasons which once supported it exist no longer, or at any rate seem about to disappear very soon. For undoubtedly there arrive periods when, the circumstances and conditions of Government having changed, the guiding maxims of Government ought to change also. *J'ai dit souvent*, says Mirabeau,[1] admonishing the Court of France in 1790, *qu'on devait changer de manière de gouverner, lorsque le gouvernement n'est plus le même.* And these decisive

[1] *Correspondance entre le Comte de Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck*, publiée par M. de Bacourt, Paris, 1851, vol. ii. p. 143.

changes in the political situation of a people happen gradually as well as violently. "In the silent lapse of events," says Burke,[1] writing in England twenty years before the French Revolution, "as material alterations have been insensibly brought about in the policy and character of governments and nations, as those which have been marked by the tumult of public revolutions."

The wish for a more deliberate and systematically reasoned action on the part of the state in dealing with education in this country is more than once expressed or implied in the following pages. In the introduction I propose to submit to those who have been accustomed to regard all State-action with jealousy some reasons for thinking that the circumstances which once made that jealousy prudent and natural have undergone an essential change. I desire to lead them to consider with me whether, in the present altered conjuncture, that State-action, which was once dangerous, may not become, not only without danger in itself, but the means of helping us against dangers from another quarter. To combine and present the considerations upon which these two propositions are based is a task of some difficulty and delicacy. My aim is to invite impartial reflection upon the subject, not to make a hostile attack against old opinions, still less to set on foot and fully equip a new theory. In offering, therefore, the thoughts which have suggested themselves to me, I shall studiously avoid all particular applications of them likely to give offence, and shall use no more illustration and development than may be indispensable to enable the reader to seize and appreciate them.

The dissolution of the old political parties which have governed this country since the revolution has long been remarked. It was repeatedly declared to be happening long before it actually took place, while the vital energy of these parties still subsisted in full vigour, and was threatened only by some temporary obstruction. It has been eagerly deprecated long after it had actually begun to take place, when it was in full progress and inevitable. These parties, differing in so much else, were yet alike

[1] Burke's *Works* (edit. of 1852), vol. iii. p. 115.

in this, that they were both, in a certain broad sense, *aristocratical* parties. They were combinations of persons considerable, either by great family and estate, or by court favour, or, lastly, by eminent abilities and popularity; this last body, however, attaining participation in public affairs only through a conjunction with one or other of the former. These connections, though they contained men of very various degrees of birth and property, were still wholly leavened with the feelings and habits of the upper class of the nation. They had the bond of a common culture, and, however their political opinions and acts might differ, what they said and did had the air and style imparted by this culture, and by a common and elevated social condition.

Aristocratical bodies have no taste for a very imposing executive, or for a very active and penetrating domestic administration. They have a sense of equality among themselves, and of constituting in themselves what is greatest and most dignified in the realm, which makes their pride revolt against the overshadowing greatness and dignity of a commanding executive. They have a temper of independence, and a habit of uncontrolled action, which makes them impatient of encountering, in the management of the interior concerns of the country, the machinery and regulations of a superior and peremptory power. The different parties amongst them, as they successively get possession of the government, respect this jealous disposition in their opponents, because they share it themselves. It is a disposition proper to them as great personages, not as ministers; and as they are great personages for their whole life, while they may be ministers but for a very short time, the instinct of their social condition avails more with them than the instinct of their official function. To administer as little as possible, to make its weight felt in foreign affairs rather than in domestic, to see in ministerial station rather a means of grandeur and dignity than a means of searching and useful administrative activity, is the natural tendency of an aristocratic executive. It is a tendency which is creditable to the good sense of aristocracies, honourable to their

moderation, and at the same time fortunate for their country, of whose internal development they are not precisely fitted to have the full direction.

One strong and beneficial influence, however, the administration of a vigorous and high-minded aristocracy is calculated to exert upon a robust and sound people. I had occasion lately, in speaking of Homer, to say very often, and with much emphasis, that he is *in the grand style*. It is the chief virtue of a healthy and uncorrupted aristocracy, that it is, in general, in this grand style. That elevation of character, that noble way of thinking and behaving, which is an eminent gift of nature to some individuals, is also often generated in whole classes of men (at least when these come of a strong and good race) by the possession of power, by the importance and responsibility of high station, by habitually dealing with great things, by being placed above the necessity of constantly struggling for little things. And it is the source of great virtues. It may go along with a not very quick or open intelligence, but it cannot well go along with a conduct vulgar and ignoble. A governing class imbued with it may not be capable of intelligently leading the masses of its people to the highest pitch of welfare possible for them, but it sets them an invaluable example of qualities without which no really high welfare can exist. This has been done for their nation by the best aristocracies. The Roman aristocracy did it: the English aristocracy has done it. They each fostered in the mass of the peoples they governed—peoples of sturdy moral constitution and apt to learn such lessons—a greatness of spirit, the natural growth of the condition of magnates and rulers, but not the natural growth of the condition of the common people. They made, the one of the Roman, the other of the English people, in spite of all the shortcomings of each, great peoples—peoples *in the grand style*. And this they did while wielding the people according to their own notions, and in the direction which seemed good to them; not as servants and instruments of the people, but as its commanders and heads; solicitous for the good of their country, indeed, but taking for granted that of

that good they themselves were the supreme judges, and were to fix the conditions.

The time has arrived, however, when it is becoming impossible for the aristocracy of England to conduct and wield the English nation any longer. It still, indeed, administers public affairs; and it is a great error to suppose, as many persons in England suppose, that it administers but does not govern. He who administers, governs,[1] because he infixes his own mark and stamps his own character on all public affairs as they pass through his hands; and therefore, so long as the English aristocracy administers the State, it still governs it. But signs not to be mistaken show that its headship and leadership of the nation, by virtue of the substantial acquiescence of the body of the nation in its predominance and right to lead, is nearly over. That acquiescence was the tenure by which it held its power; and it is fast giving way. The superiority of the upper class over all others is no longer so great; the willingness of the others to recognise that superiority is no longer so ready.

This change has been brought about by natural and inevitable causes, and neither the great nor the multitude are to be blamed for it. The growing demands and audaciousness of the latter, the encroaching spirit of democracy, are, indeed, matters of loud complaint with some persons. But these persons are complaining of human nature itself when they thus complain of a manifestation of its native and ineradicable impulse. Life itself consists, say the philosophers, in the effort *to affirm one's own essence;* meaning by this, to develop one's own existence fully and freely, to have ample light and air, to be neither cramped nor overshadowed. Democracy is trying *to affirm its own essence;* to live, to enjoy, to possess the world, as aristocracy has tried, and successfully tried,

[1] To quote once more from two men, very unlike, but both of them such perspicacious observers, and such weighty authorities, on any matter of politics—Mirabeau and Burke. *Administrer, c'est gouverner*, says Mirabeau; *gouverner, c'est régner; tout se réduit là.* And Burke says: "Constitute government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of the powers which are left at large to the prudence and uprightness of ministers of state."

before it. Ever since Europe emerged from barbarism, ever since the condition of the common people began a little to improve, ever since their minds began to stir, this effort of democracy has been gaining strength; and the more their condition improves the more strength this effort gains. So potent is the charm of life and expansion upon the living, the moment men are aware of them they begin to desire them, and the more they have of them the more they crave.

This movement of democracy, like other operations of nature, merits properly neither blame nor praise. Its partisans are apt to give it credit which it does not deserve, while its enemies are apt to upbraid it unjustly. Its friends celebrate it as the author of all freedom; but political freedom may very well be established by aristocratic founders; and, certainly, the political freedom of England owes more to the grasping English barons than to democracy. Social freedom—equality—that is rather the field of the conquests of democracy. And here what I must call the injustness of its enemies comes in. For its seeking after equality, democracy is often, in this country above all, vehemently and scornfully blamed; its character contrasted with that of liberty, which can magnanimously endure social distinctions; its operations all referred, as of course, to the stirrings of a base and malignant envy. No doubt there is a gross and vulgar spirit of envy prompting the hearts of many of those who cry for equality. No doubt there are ignoble natures which prefer equality to liberty. But what we have to ask is, when the life of democracy is admitted as something natural and inevitable, whether this or that product of democracy is a necessary growth from its parent stock, or merely an excrescence upon it. If it be the latter, certainly it may be due to the meanest and most culpable passions. But if it be the former, then this product, however base and blameworthy the passions which it may sometimes be made to serve, can in itself be no more reprehensible than the vital impulse of democracy is in itself reprehensible; and this impulse is, as has been shown, identical with the ceaseless vital effort of human

nature itself. Now, can it be denied, that a certain approach to equality, at any rate a certain reduction of signal inequalities, is a natural, instinctive demand of that impulse which drives society as a whole—no longer individuals and limited classes only, but the mass of a community—to develop itself with the utmost possible fulness and freedom? Can it be denied, that to live in a society of equals tends in general to make a man's spirits expand, and his faculties work easily and actively; while, to live in a society of superiors, although it may occasionally be a very good discipline, yet in general tends to tame the spirits and to make the play of the faculties less secure and active? Can it be denied, that to be heavily overshadowed, to be profoundly insignificant, has, on the whole, a depressing and benumbing effect on the character? I know that some individuals react against the strongest impediments, and owe success and greatness to the efforts which they are thus forced to make. But the question is not about individuals. The question is about the common bulk of mankind, persons without extraordinary gifts or exceptional energy, and who will ever require, in order to make the best of themselves, encouragement and directly favouring circumstances. Can any one deny, that for these the spectacle, when they would rise, of a condition of splendour, grandeur, and culture, which they cannot possibly reach, has the effect of making them flag in spirit, and of disposing them to sink despondingly back into their own condition? Can any one deny, that the knowledge how poor and insignificant the best condition of importance and culture attainable by them must be esteemed by a class incomparably richer endowed, tends to cheapen this modest possible amelioration in the account of those classes also for whom it would be relatively a real progress, and to disenchant their imaginations with it? It seems to me impossible to deny this. And therefore a philosophic observer,[1] with no love for demo-

[1] M. de Tocqueville. See his *Démocratie en Amérique* (edit. of 1835), vol. i. p. 11: "Le peuple est plus grossier dans les pays aristocratiques que partout ailleurs. Dans ces lieux, où se rencontrent des hommes si forts et si riches, les faibles et les pauvres se sentent comme accablés de leur bassesse; ne découvrant aucun

cracy, but rather with a terror of it, has been constrained to remark, that "the common people is more uncivilised in aristocratic countries than in any others;" because there "the lowly and the poor feel themselves, as it were, overwhelmed with the weight of their own inferiority." He has been constrained to remark,[1] that "there is such a thing as a manly and legitimate passion for equality, prompting men to desire to be, *all* of them, in the enjoyment of power and consideration." And, in France, that very equality which is so impetuously decried, while it has by no means improved (it is said) the upper classes of French society, has undoubtedly given to the lower classes, to the body of the common people, a self-respect, an enlargement of spirit, a consciousness of counting for something in their country's action, which has raised them in the scale of humanity. The common people in France seems to me the soundest part of the French nation. They seem to me more free from the two opposite degradations of multitudes, brutality and servility; to have a more developed human life, more of what distinguishes elsewhere the cultured classes from the vulgar, than the common people in any other country with which I am acquainted.

I do not say that grandeur and prosperity may not be attained by a nation divided into the most widely distinct classes, and presenting the most signal inequalities of rank and fortune. I do not say that great national virtues may not be developed in it. I do not even say that a popular order, accepting this demarcation of classes as an eternal providential arrangement, not questioning the natural right of a superior order to lead it, content within its own sphere, admiring the grandeur and high-mindedness of its ruling class, and catching on its own spirit some reflex of what it thus admires, may not be a happier body, as to the eye of imagination it is certainly a more beautiful body, than a popular order, pushing,

point par lequel ils puissent regagner l'égalité, ils désespèrent entièrement d'eux-mêmes, et se laissent tomber au-dessous de la dignité humaine."

[1] *Démocratie en Amérique*, vol. i. p. 60.

excited, and presumptuous; a popular order, jealous of recognising fixed superiorities, petulantly claiming to be as good as its betters, and tastelessly attiring itself with the fashions and designations which have become unalterably associated with a wealthy and refined class, and which, tricking out those who have neither wealth nor refinement, are ridiculous. But a popular order of that old-fashioned stamp exists now only for the imagination. It is not force with which modern society has to reckon. Such a body may be a sturdy, honest, and sound-hearted lower class, but it is not a democratic people. It is not that power which at the present day in all nations is to be found existing; in some, has obtained the mastery; in others, is yet in a state of expectation and preparation.

The power of France in Europe is at this day mainly owing to the completeness with which she has organised democratic institutions. The action of the French State is excessive; but it is too little understood in England that the French people has adopted this action for its own purposes, has in great measure attained those purposes by it, and owes to having done so the chief part of its influence in Europe. The growing power in Europe is democracy, and France has organised democracy with a certain indisputable grandeur and success. The ideas of 1789 were working everywhere in the eighteenth century; but it was because in France the State adopted them that the French Revolution became an historic epoch for the world, and France the lode-star of continental democracy. Her airs of superiority and her overweening pretensions come from her sense of the power which she derives from the cause. Every one knows how Frenchmen proclaim France to be at the head of civilisation, the French army to be the soldier of God, Paris to be the brain of Europe, and so on. All this is, no doubt, in a vein of sufficient fatuity and bad taste; but it means, at bottom, that France believes she has so organised herself as to facilitate for all members of her society full and free expansion; that she believes herself to have remodelled her institutions with an eye to reason rather than custom, and to right rather than fact; it means, that she believes the

other peoples of Europe to be preparing themselves, more or less rapidly, for a like achievement, and that she is conscious of her power and influence upon them as an initiatress and example. In this belief there is a part of truth and a part of delusion. I think it is more profitable for a Frenchman to consider the part of delusion contained in it; for an Englishman, the part of truth.

It is because aristocracies almost inevitably fail to appreciate justly, or even to take into their mind, this instinct pushing the masses towards expansion and fuller life, that they lose their hold over them. It is the old story of the incapacity of aristocracies for ideas, the secret of their want of success in modern epochs. The people treats them with flagrant injustice when it denies all obligation to them. They can, and often do, impart a high spirit, a fine ideal of grandeur, to the people: thus they lay the foundations of a great nation; but they leave the people still the multitude, the crowd; they have small belief in the power of the ideas which are its life. Themselves a power reposing on all which is most solid, material, and visible, they are slow to attach any great importance to influences impalpable, spiritual, and viewless. Although, therefore, a disinterested looker-on might often be disposed, seeing what has actually been achieved by aristocracies, to retain them or to replace them in their preponderance rather than commit a nation to the hazards of a new and untried future, yet the masses instinctively feel that they can never consent to this without renouncing the inmost impulse of their being, and that they should make such a renunciation cannot seriously be expected of them. Except on conditions which make its expansion, in the sense understood by itself, fully possible, democracy will never frankly ally itself with aristocracy; and on these conditions perhaps no aristocracy will ever frankly ally itself with it. Even the English aristocracy, so politic, so capable of compromises, has shown no signs of being able so to transform itself as to render such an alliance possible. The reception given by the Peers to the bill for establishing life-peerages was, in this respect, of ill omen. The separation

between aristocracy and democracy will probably, therefore, go on still widening.

And it must in fairness be added, that as in one most important part of general human culture—openness to ideas and ardour for them—aristocracy is less advanced than democracy, to replace or keep the latter under the tutelage of the former would in some respects actually be unfavourable to the progress of the world. At epochs when new ideas are powerfully fermenting in a society, and profoundly changing its spirit, aristocracies, as they are in general not long suffered to guide it without question, so are they by nature not well fitted to guide it intelligently.

In England democracy has been slow in developing itself, having met with much to withstand it, not only in the worth of the aristocracy, but also in the fine qualities of the common people. The aristocracy has been more in sympathy with the common people than perhaps any other aristocracy. It has rarely given them great umbrage: it has neither been frivolous, so as to provoke their contempt, nor impertinent, so as to provoke their irritation. Above all, it has in general meant to act with justice, according to its own notions of justice. Therefore the feeling of admiring deference to such a class was more deep-rooted in the people of this country, more cordial, and more persistent than in any people of the Continent. But, besides this, the vigour and high spirit of the English common people bred in them a self-reliance which disposed each man to act individually and independently; and so long as this disposition prevails through a nation divided into classes, the predominance of an aristocracy, of the class containing the greatest and strongest individuals of the nation, is secure. Democracy is a force in which the concert of a great number of men makes up for the weakness of each man taken by himself; democracy accepts a certain relative rise in their condition, obtainable by this concert for a great number, as something desirable in itself, because though this is undoubtedly far below grandeur, it is yet a good deal above insignificance. A very strong, self-reliant people neither easily learns to

act in concert, nor easily brings itself to regard any middling good, any good short of the best, as an object ardently to be coveted and striven for. It keeps its eye on the grand prizes, and these are to be won only by distancing competitors, by getting before one's comrades, by succeeding all by one's self; and so long as a people works thus individually, it does not work democratically. The English people has all the qualities which dispose a people to work individually; may it never lose them! A people without the salt of these qualities, relying wholly on mutual co-operation, and proposing to itself second-rate ideals, would arrive at the pettiness and stationariness of China. But it is no longer so entirely ruled by them as not to show visible beginnings of democratic action; it becomes more and more sensible to the irresistible seduction of democratic ideas, promising to each individual of the multitude increased self-respect and expansion with the increased importance and authority of the multitude to which he belongs, with the diminished preponderance of the aristocratic class above him.

While the habit and disposition of deference are thus dying out among the lower classes of the English nation, it seems to me indisputable that the advantages which command deference, eminent superiority in high feeling, dignity, and culture, tend to diminish among the highest class. I shall not be suspected of any inclination to underrate the aristocracy of this country. I regard it as the worthiest, as it certainly has been the most successful aristocracy, of which history makes record: if it has not been able to develop excellences which do not belong to the nature of an aristocracy, yet it has been able to avoid defects to which the nature of an aristocracy is peculiarly prone. But I cannot read the history of the flowering time of the English aristocracy, the eighteenth century, and then look at this aristocracy in our own century, without feeling that there has been a change. I am not now thinking of private and domestic virtues, of morality, of decorum: perhaps with respect to these there has in this class, as in society at large, been a change for the better; I am thinking of those public and conspicuous

virtues by which the multitude is captivated and led—lofty spirit, commanding character, exquisite culture. It is true that the advance of all classes in culture and refinement may make the culture of one class, which, isolated, appeared remarkable, appear so no longer; but exquisite culture and great dignity are always something rare and striking, and it is the distinction of the English aristocracy, in the eighteenth century, that not only was their culture something rare by comparison with the rawness of the masses, but it was something rare and admirable in itself. It is rather that this rare culture of the highest class has actually somewhat declined,[1] than that it has come to look less by juxtaposition with the augmented culture of other classes. Probably democracy has something to answer for in this falling off of her rival. To feel itself raised on high, venerated, followed, no doubt stimulates a fine nature to keep itself worthy to be followed, venerated, raised on high; hence that lofty maxim, *noblesse oblige*. To feel its culture something precious and singular makes such a nature zealous to retain and extend it. The elation and energy thus fostered by the sense of its advantages certainly enhances the worth, strengthens the behaviour, and quickens all the active powers of the class enjoying it. *Possunt quia posse videntur*. The removal of the stimulus a little relaxes their energy. It is not so much that they sink to be somewhat less than themselves, as that they cease to be somewhat more than themselves. But, however this may be, whencesoever the change may proceed, I cannot doubt that, in the aristocratic virtue, in the intrinsic commanding force of the English upper class, there is a diminution. Relics of great veneration are still to be seen amongst them, surviving exemplars of noble manners and consummate culture; but they disappear one after

[1] This will appear doubtful to no one well acquainted with the literature and memoirs of the last century. To give but two illustrations out of a thousand. Let the reader refer to the anecdote told by Robert Wood in his *Essay on the Genius of Homer* (London, 1775), p. vii., and to Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* (edit. of 1845), vol. i. pp. 115, 143; vol. ii. p. 54, and then say whether the culture there indicated as the culture of a *class* has maintained itself at that level.

the other, and no one of their order takes their place. At the very moment when democracy becomes less and less disposed to follow and to admire, aristocracy becomes less and less qualified to command and to captivate.

On the one hand, then, the masses of the people in this country are preparing to take a much more active part than formerly in controlling its destinies; on the other hand, the aristocracy (using this word in the widest sense to include not only the nobility and the landed gentry, but also those reinforcements from the classes bordering upon itself which this class constantly attracted and assimilated), while it is threatened with losing its hold on the rudder of Government, its power to give to public affairs its own bias and direction, is losing also that influence on the spirit and character of the people which it long exercised.

I know that this will be warmly denied by some persons. Those who have grown up amidst a certain state of things, those whose habits, and interests, and affections are closely concerned with its continuance, are slow to believe that it is not a part of the order of nature, or that it can ever come to an end. But I think that what I have here laid down will not appear doubtful either to the most competent and friendly foreign observers of this country, or to those Englishmen who, clear of all influences of class or party, have applied themselves steadily to see the tendency of their nation as it really is. Assuming it to be true, a great number of considerations are suggested by it; but it is my purpose here to insist upon one only.

That one consideration is: On what action may we rely, to replace, for some time at any rate, that action of the aristocracy upon the people of this country which we have seen exercise an influence in many respects elevating and beneficial, but which is rapidly, and from inevitable causes, ceasing? In other words, and to use a short and significant modern expression which every one understands: What influence may help us to prevent the English people from becoming, with the growth of democracy, *Americanised?* I confess I am disposed to answer: *Nothing but the influence of the State.*

M

I know what a chorus of objectors will be ready. One will say: Rather repair and restore the influence of aristocracy. Another will say: It is not a bad thing, but a good thing, that the English people should be Americanised. But the most formidable and the most widely entertained objection, by far, will be that which founds itself upon the present actual state of things in another country; which says: Look at France! there you have a signal example of the alliance of democracy with a powerful State-action, and see how it works.

This last and principal objection I will notice first: I have had occasion to touch upon the first already, and upon the second I shall touch presently. It seems to me, then, that one may save oneself from much idle terror at names and shadows if one will be at the pains to remember what different conditions the different character of two nations must necessarily impose on the operation of any principle. That which operates noxiously in the one may operate wholesomely in the other, because the unsound part of the one's character may be yet further inflamed and enlarged by it, the unsound part of the other's may find in it a corrective and an abatement. This is the great use which two unlike characters may find in observing each other. Neither is likely to have the other's faults, so each may safely adopt as much as suits him of the other's qualities. If I were a Frenchman, I should never be weary of admiring the independent, individual, local habits of action in England; of directing attention to the evils occasioned in France by the excessive action of the State; for I should be very sure, that, say what I might, the part of the State would never be too small in France, nor that of the individual too large. Being an Englishman, I see nothing but good in freely recognising the coherence, rationality, and efficaciousness which characterise the strong State-action of France; of acknowledging the want of method, reason, and result which attend the feeble State-action of England; because I am very sure that, strengthen in England the action of the State as one may, it will always find itself sufficiently controlled. But, when the *Constitutionnel* sneers

at the do-little talkativeness of parliamentary government, or when the *Morning Star* inveighs against the despotism of a centralised administration, it seems to me that they lose their labour, because they are hardening themselves against dangers to which they are neither of them liable. Both the one and the other, in plain truth,

> Compound for sins they are inclin'd to,
> By damning those they have no mind to.

So that the exaggeration of the action of the State, in France, furnishes no reason for absolutely refusing to enlarge the action of the State in England, because the genius and temper of the people of this country are such as to render impossible that exaggeration which the genius and temper of the French rendered easy. There is no danger at all that the native independence and individualism of the English character will ever belie itself, and become weakly prone to lean on others, or blindly confiding in them.

English democracy runs no risk of being overmastered by the State; it is almost certain that it will throw off the tutelage of aristocracy. Its real danger is, that it will have far too much its own way, and be left far too much to itself. "What harm will there be in that?" say some. "Are we not a self-governing people?" I answer: "We have never yet been a *self-governing democracy*, or anything like it." The difficulty for democracy is, how to find and keep high ideals. The individuals who compose it are, the bulk of them, persons who need to follow an ideal, not to set one; and one ideal of greatness, high feeling, and fine culture, which an aristocracy once supplied to them, they lose by the very fact of ceasing to be a lower order and becoming a democracy. Nations are not truly great solely because the individuals composing them are numerous, free, and active; but they are great when these numbers, this freedom, and this activity are employed in the service of an ideal somewhat higher than that of an ordinary man, taken by himself. Not only the greatness of nations, but their very unity, depends on this. In fact, unless a nation's

action is inspired by an ideal commanding the respect of the many as higher than each ordinary man's own, there is nothing to keep that nation together, nothing to resist the dissolvent action of innumerable and conflicting wills and opinions. *Quot homines, tot sententiæ*, and one man's opinion is as good as another's—there is no basis for a real unity here. In this regard, what is now passing in the United States of America is full of instruction for us. I hear numberless English lamenting the disruption of the American Union; they esteem it a triumph for the enemies of all freedom, a discouragement for the principles of self-government as they have been long understood and put in practice in this country as well as in America. I, on the contrary, esteem it a great and timely lesson to the over-individualism of the English character. We in England have had, in our great aristocratical and ecclesiastical institutions, a principle of cohesion and unity which the Americans had not; they gave the tone to the nation, and the nation took it from them; self-government here was quite a different thing from self-government there. Our society is probably destined to become much more democratic: who will give the tone to the nation then? That is the question. The greatest men of America, her Washingtons, Hamiltons, Madisons, well understanding that aristocratical institutions are not in all times and places possible; well perceiving that in their Republic there was no place for these; comprehending, therefore, that from these that security for national unity and greatness, an ideal commanding popular reverence, was not to be obtained, but knowing that this ideal was indispensable, would have been rejoiced to found a substitute for it in the dignity and authority of the State. They deplored the weakness and insignificance of the executive power as a calamity. When the inevitable course of events has made our self-government something really like that of America, when it has removed or weakened that security for a noble national spirit, and therefore for unity, which we possessed in *aristocracy*, will the substitute of *the State* be equally wanting to us? If it is, then the dangers of America will really be ours: the multi-

tude in power, with no ideal to elevate or guide it; the spirit of the nation vulgarised; unity imperilled because there is no institution grand enough to unite round.

It would really be wasting time to contend at length, that to give more prominence to the idea of the State is now possible in this country without endangering liberty. In other countries the habits and dispositions of the people may be such that the State, if once it acts, may be easily suffered to usurp exorbitantly; here they certainly are not. Here the people will always sufficiently keep in mind that any public authority is a trust delegated by themselves for certain purposes, and with certain limits; and if that authority pretends to an absolute, independent character, they will soon enough (and most rightly) remind it of its error. Here there can be no question of a paternal Government, of an irresponsible executive power, professing to act for the people's good, but without the people's consent, and, if necessary, against the people's wishes; here no one dreams of removing a single constitutional control, of abolishing a single safeguard for securing a correspondence between the acts of Government and the will of the nation. The question is, whether, retaining all its power of control over a Government which should abuse its trust, the nation may not now find advantage in voluntarily allowing to it purposes somewhat ampler, and limits somewhat wider within which to execute them, than formerly; whether it may not thus acquire in the State an ideal of high reason and right feeling, representing its best self, commanding general respect, and forming a rallying-point for the intelligence and for the worthiest instincts of the community, which will herein find a true bond of union.

I am convinced that, if the worst mischiefs of democracy ever happen in England, it will be, not because a new condition of things has come upon us unforeseen, but because, though we all foresaw it, our efforts to deal with it were in the wrong direction. At the present time almost every one believes in the growth of democracy. Almost every one talks of it, almost every one laments it; but the last thing people can be brought to do, is to

make timely preparation for it. Many of those who, if they would, could do most to forward this work of preparation, are made slack and hesitating by the belief that, after all, in England things may probably never go very far; that it will be possible to keep much more of the past than speculators say. Others, with a more robust faith, think that all democracy wants is vigorous putting down, and that, with a good will and strong hand, it is perfectly possible to retain the whole Middle Ages. Others, free from the prejudices of class and position which warp the judgment of these, and who would, I believe, be the first and greatest gainers by strengthening the hands of the State, are averse from doing so by reason of suspicions and fears, once perfectly well grounded, but in this age and in the present circumstances well grounded no longer.

I speak of the middle classes. I have already shown how it is the natural disposition of an aristocratical class to view with jealousy the development of a considerable State-power. But this disposition has in England found extraordinary favour and support in regions not aristocratical—from the middle classes; and above all, from the kernel of these classes, the Protestant Dissenters. And for a very good reason. In times when passions ran high, even an aristocratical Executive was easily stimulated into using, for the gratification of its friends and the abasement of its enemies, those administrative engines which, the moment it chose to stretch its hand forth, stood ready for its grasp. Matters of domestic concern, matters of religious profession and religious exercise, offered a peculiar field for an intervention gainful and agreeable to friends, injurious and irritating to enemies. Such an intervention was attempted and practised. The State lent its machinery and authority to the aristocratical and ecclesiastical party, which it regarded as its best support. The party which suffered comprised the flower and strength of that middle class of society, always very flourishing and robust in this country. That powerful class, from this specimen of the administrative activity of the State, conceived a strong anti-

pathy against all intervention of Government in certain spheres. An active, stringent administration in those spheres meant at that time a High Church and Prelatic administration in them — an administration galling to the Puritan party and to the middle class; and this aggrieved class had naturally no proneness to draw nice philosophical distinctions between State-action in these spheres, as a thing for abstract consideration, and State-action in them as they practically felt and supposed themselves likely long to feel it, guided by their adversaries. In the minds of the English middle class, therefore, State-action in social and domestic concerns became inextricably associated with the idea of a Conventicle Act, a Five Mile Act, an Act of Uniformity. Their abhorrence of such a State-action as this they extended to State-action in general; and, having never known a beneficent and just State-power, they enlarged their hatred of a cruel and partial State-power, the only one they had ever known, into a maxim that no State-power was to be trusted, that the least action, in certain provinces, was rigorously to be denied to the State whenever this was possible.

Thus that jealousy of an important, sedulous, energetic Executive natural to grandees unwilling to suffer their personal authority to be circumscribed, their individual grandeur to be eclipsed, by the authority and grandeur of the State, became reinforced in this country by a like sentiment among the middle classes, who had no such authority or grandeur to lose, but who, by a hasty reasoning, had theoretically condemned for ever an agency which they had practically found at times oppressive. *Leave us to ourselves!* magnates and middle classes alike cried to the State. Not only from those who were full and abounded went up this prayer, but also from those whose condition admitted of a great amelioration. Not only did the whole repudiate the physician, but also those who were sick.

For it is evident that the action of a diligent, an impartial, and a national Government, while it can do little to better the condition, already fortunate enough,

of the highest and richest class of its people, can really do much, by institution and regulation, to better that of the middle and lower classes. The State can bestow certain broad collective benefits, which are indeed mean and insignificant if compared with the advantages already possessed by individual grandeur, but which are rich and valuable if compared with the make-shifts of mediocrity and poverty. A good thing meant for the many cannot well be so exquisite as the good things of the few; but it can easily, if it comes from a donor of great resources and wide power, be incomparably better than what the many could, unaided, provide for themselves.

In all the remarks which I am making, I impose on myself the rule carefully to abstain from any attempt to suggest a positive application of them. I do not presume to discuss in what manner the world of facts is to adapt itself to the changed world of ideas which I have been describing. I offer general considerations—presented, I hope, without offensiveness, as I am sure they have been formed without prejudice—considerations suggested by watching the course of men and classes in this country, to the silent reflection of thinking minds. This an isolated individual, however humble, may fairly attempt; more he cannot attempt properly; perhaps the time has not yet come for more to be attempted at all. But one breach of my own rule I shall here venture to commit, by dwelling for a moment on a matter of practical institution designed to meet new social exigencies: on the intervention of the State in public education.

The public secondary schools of France, decreed by the Revolution and established under the Consulate, are said by many good judges to be inferior to the old colleges. By means of the old colleges and of private tutors, the French aristocracy could procure for its children (so it is said, and very likely with truth) a better training than that which is now given in the lyceums. Yes; but the boon conferred by the State, when it founded the lyceums, was not for the aristocracy—it was for the vast middle class of Frenchmen. This class, certainly, had not already the means of a better training for its

children before the State interfered. This class, certainly, would not have succeeded in procuring by its own efforts a better training for its children if the State had not interfered. Through the interference of the State, this class enjoys better schools for its children, not than the great and rich enjoy (that is not the question), but than the same class enjoys in any country where the State has not interfered to found them. The lyceums may not be so good as Eton or Harrow, but they are a great deal better than a *Classical and Commercial Academy*.

The aristocratic classes in England may, perhaps, be well content to rest satisfied with their Eton and Harrow; the State is not likely to do better for them; nay, the superior confidence, spirit, and style engendered by a training in the great public schools, constitute for these classes a real privilege, a real engine of command, which they might, if they were selfish, be sorry to lose by the establishment of schools great enough to beget a like spirit in the classes below them. But the middle classes in England have every reason not to rest content with their private schools: the State can do a great deal better for them; by giving to schools for these classes a public character, it can bring the instruction in them under a criticism which the knowledge of these classes is not in itself at present able to supply; by giving to them a national character, it can confer on them a greatness and a noble spirit which the tone of these classes is not in itself at present adequate to impart. Such schools would soon prove notable competitors with the existing public schools. They would do these a great service by stimulating them, and making them look into their own weak points more closely: economical, because with charges uniform and under severe revision they would do a great service to that large body of persons who, at present, seeing that on the whole the best secondary instruction to be found is that of the existing public schools, obtain it for their children from a sense of duty, although they can ill afford it, and although its cost is certainly exorbitant; thus the middle classes might, by the aid of the State, better their instruction, while still keeping its cost moderate. This

in itself would be a gain; but this gain would be nothing in comparison with that of acquiring the sense of belonging to great and honourable seats of learning, and of breathing in their youth the air of the best culture of their nation. This sense would be an educational influence for them of the highest value; it would really augment their self-respect and moral force; it would truly fuse them with the class above, and tend to bring about for them the equality which they desire.

So it is not State-action in itself which the middle and lower classes of a nation ought to deprecate; it is State-action exercised by a hostile class, and for their oppression. From a State-action reasonably, equitably, and nationally exercised they may derive great benefit; greater, by the very nature and necessity of things, than can be derived from this source by the class above them. For the middle or lower classes to obstruct such a State-action, to repel its benefits, is to play the game of their enemies, and to prolong for themselves a condition of real inferiority.

This, I know, is rather dangerous ground to tread upon. The great middle classes of this country are conscious of no weakness, no inferiority; they do not want any one to provide anything for them; such as they are, they believe that the freedom and prosperity of England are their work, and that the future belongs to them. No one admires them more than I do; but those who admire them most, and who most believe in their capabilities, can render them no better service than by pointing out in what they underrate their deficiencies, and how their deficiencies, if unremedied, may impair their future. They want culture and dignity; they want ideas. Aristocracy has culture and dignity: democracy has readiness for new ideas, and ardour for the ideas it possesses: of these, our middle class has the last only—ardour for the ideas it already possesses. It believes ardently in liberty, it believes ardently in industry; and, by its zealous belief in these two ideas, it has accomplished great things. What it has accomplished by its belief in industry is patent to all the world. The liberties of England are less its exclusive work than it supposes; for these, aristocracy

has achieved at least as much; but of one inestimable part of liberty—liberty of thought—it has been (without precisely intending it) the principal champion. The intellectual action of the Church of England upon the nation has been insignificant; its social action has been great and useful. The social action of Protestant Dissent—that genuine product of the English middle class—has been insignificant; its positive intellectual action has been insignificant; its negative intellectual action—in so far as by strenuously maintaining for itself, against persecution, liberty of conscience, and the right of free opinion, it at the same time maintained and established this right as a universal principle—has been invaluable. But the actual results of this negative intellectual service rendered by Protestant Dissent—by the middle class—to the whole community, great as they undoubtedly are, must not be taken for something which they are not. It is a very great thing to be able to think as you like; but, after all, an important question remains—*what* you think. It is a fine thing to secure a free stage and no favour; but, after all, the part which you play on that stage will have to be criticised. Now, all the liberty and industry in the world will not ensure two things: a high reason and a fine culture. They may favour them, but they will not of themselves produce them: they may exist without them. But it is by the appearance of these two things, in some shape or other, in the life of a nation, that it becomes something more than an independent, an energetic, a successful nation—that it becomes a *great* nation.

In modern epochs, the part of a high reason, of ideas, acquires constantly increasing importance in the conduct of the world's affairs. A fine culture is the complement of a high reason, and it is in the conjunction of both with character, with energy, that the ideal for men and nations is placed. It is common to hear remarks on the frequent divorce between culture and character, and to infer from this that culture is a mere varnish, and that character only deserves any serious attention. No error can be more fatal: culture without character is, no doubt, something frivolous, vain, and weak, but character without culture

is, on the other hand, something raw, blind, and dangerous. The most interesting, the most truly glorious peoples, are those in which the alliance of the two has been effected most successfully, and its result spread most widely. This is why the spectacle of ancient Athens has such profound interest for a rational man; that it is the spectacle of the culture of a *people*. It is not an aristocracy leavening with its own high spirit the multitude which it wields, but leaving it the unformed multitude still; it is not a democracy, acute and energetic, but tasteless, narrow-minded, and ignoble; it is the middle and lower classes in the highest development of their humanity that these classes have yet reached. It was the *many* who relished those arts, who were not satisfied with less than those monuments; in the conversations recorded by Plato, or by the matter-of-fact Xenophon, which for the free yet refined discussion of ideas has set the tone for the whole cultivated world, shopkeepers and tradesmen of Athens mingle as speakers. For any one but a pedant, this is why a handful of Athenians of two thousand years ago are more interesting than the millions of most nations our contemporaries. Surely, if they knew this, those friends of progress who have confidently pronounced the remains of the ancient world so much lumber, and a classical education an aristocratic impertinence, might be inclined to reconsider their sentence.

The course taken in the next fifty years by the middle classes of this nation will probably give a decisive turn to its history. If they will not seek the alliance of the State for their own elevation, if they go on exaggerating their spirit of individualism, if they persist in their jealousy of all governmental action, if they cannot learn that the antipathies and the Shibboleths of a past age are now an anachronism for them—that will not prevent them, probably, from getting the rule of their country for a season, but they will certainly *Americanise* it. They will rule it by their energy, but they will deteriorate it by their low ideals and want of culture. In the decline of the aristocratical element, which in some sort supplied an ideal to ennoble the spirit of the nation and to keep it

together, there will be no other element present to perform this service. It is in itself a serious calamity for a nation that its tone of feeling and grandeur of spirit should be lowered or dulled; but the calamity appears far more serious still when we consider that, as we have seen, this high tone of feeling supplies a principle of cohesion by which a nation is kept united; that without this, not only its nobleness is endangered, but its unity. Another consideration is, that the middle classes, remaining as they are now, with their narrow and somewhat harsh and unattractive spirit and culture, will almost certainly fail to mould or assimilate the masses below them, whose sympathies are at the present moment actually wider and more liberal than theirs. They arrive, these masses, eager to enter into possession of the world, to gain a more vivid sense of their own life and activity. In this their irrepressible development, their natural educators and initiators are those immediately above them—the middle classes. If these classes cannot win their sympathy or give them their direction, society is in danger of falling into anarchy.

Therefore, with all the force I can, I wish to urge upon the middle classes of this country, both that they might be very greatly profited by the action of the State, and also that they are continuing their opposition to such action out of an unfounded fear. But at the same time I say, that the middle class has the right, in admitting the action of Government, to make the condition that this Government shall be one of its own adoption—one that it can trust. To ensure this is now in its own power. If it does not now ensure this, it ought to do so—it has the means of doing so. Two centuries ago it had not; now it has. Having this security, let it now show itself jealous to keep the action of the State equitable and rational, rather than to prevent the action of the State altogether. If the State acts amiss, let it check it; but let it no longer take for granted that the State cannot possibly act usefully.

The State—but what is the State? ery many. Speculations on the idea of a State abound, but these do not satisfy them; of that which is to have practical effect and power

they require a plain account. The full force of the term, *the State*, as the full force of any other important term, no one will master without going a little deeply, without resolutely entering the world of ideas; but it is possible to give in very plain language an account of it sufficient for all practical purposes. The State is the representative acting-power of the nation; the action of the State is the representative action of the nation. Nominally emanating from the Crown, as the ideal unity in which the nation concentrates itself, this action, by the constitution of our country, really emanates from the Ministers of the Crown. It is common to hear the depreciators of State-action run through a string of Ministers' names, and then say: "Here is really your *State;* would you accept the action of these men as your own representative action? In what respect is their judgment on national affairs likely to be any better than that of the rest of the world?" In the first place I answer:—Even supposing them to be originally no better or wiser than the rest of the world, they have two great advantages from their position: access to almost boundless means of information, and the enlargement of mind which the habit of dealing with great affairs tends to produce. Their position itself, therefore, if they are men of only average honesty and capacity, tends to give them a fitness for acting on behalf of the nation superior to that of other men of equal honesty and capacity who are not in the same position. This fitness may be yet further increased by treating them as persons on whom, indeed, a very grave responsibility has fallen, and from whom very much will be expected: nothing less than the representing, each in his own department, the collective energy and intelligence of his nation. By treating them as men on whom all this devolves to do—to their honour if they do it well, to their shame if they do it ill—one probably augments their faculty of well-doing; as it is excellently said: "To treat men as if they were better than they are, is the surest way to *make* them better than they are." But to treat men as if they had been shuffled into their places by a lucky accident, were most likely soon to be shuffled out of them again, and meanwhile ought to

magnify themselves and their office as little as possible; to treat them as if they and their functions could without much inconvenience be quite dispensed with, and they ought perpetually to be admiring their own inconceivable good fortune in being permitted to discharge them;—this is the way to paralyse all high effort in the executive government, to extinguish all lofty sense of responsibility; to make its members either merely solicitous for the gross advantages, the emolument and self-importance which they derive from their offices, or else timid, apologetic, and self-mistrustful in filling them; in either case, formal and inefficient.

But in the second place I answer:—If the executive government is really in the hands of men no wiser than the bulk of mankind, of men whose action an intelligent man would be unwilling to accept as representative of his own action, whose fault is that? It is the fault of the nation itself, which, not being in the hands of a despot or an oligarchy, being free to control the choice of those who are to sum up and concentrate its action, controls it in such a manner that it allows to be chosen agents so little in its confidence, or so mediocre, or so incompetent, that it thinks the best thing to be done with them is to reduce their action as near as possible to a nullity. Hesitating, blundering, unintelligent, inefficacious, the action of the State may be; but, such as it is, it is the collective action of the nation itself, and the nation is responsible for it; it is its own action which it suffers to be thus unsatisfactory. Nothing can free it from this responsibility. The conduct of its affairs is in its own power. To carry on into its executive proceedings the indecision, conflict, and discordance of its deliberative proceedings may be a natural defect of a free nation, but it is certainly a defect; it is a dangerous error to call it, as some do, a perfection. The want of concert, reason, and organisation in the State is the want of concert, reason, and organisation in the collective nation.

Inasmuch, therefore, as collective action is more efficacious than isolated individual efforts, a nation having great and complicated matters to deal with must greatly

gain by employing the action of the State. Only, the State-power which it employs should be a power which really represents its best self, and whose action its intelligence and justice can heartily avow and adopt; not a power which reflects its inferior self, and of whose action, as of its own second-rate action, it has perpetually to be ashamed. To offer a worthy initiative, and to set a standard of rational and equitable action—this is what the nation should expect of the State; and the more the State fulfils this expectation, the more will it be accepted in practice for what in idea it must always be. People will not then ask the State what title it has to commend or reward genius and merit, since commendation and reward imply an attitude of superiority: for it will then be felt that the State truly acts for the English nation; and the genius of the English nation is greater than the genius of any individual—greater even than Shakspeare's genius, for it includes the genius of Newton also.

I will not deny that to give a more prominent part to the State would be a considerable change in this country; that maxims once very sound, and habits once very salutary, may be appealed to against it. The sole question is, whether those maxims and habits are sound and salutary at this moment. A far graver and more difficult change, because a change at variance with maxims far less sound and habits far less salutary—to reduce the all-effacing prominence of the State, to give a more prominent part to the individual—is imperiously presenting itself to other countries. Both are the suggestions of one irresistible force which is gradually making its way everywhere, removing old conditions and imposing new, altering long-fixed habits, undermining venerable institutions, even modifying national character—*the modern spirit.*

Undoubtedly we are drawing on towards great changes; and for all nations the one thing needful is to discern clearly their own condition, in order to know what particular way they themselves may best meet them. Openness and flexibility of mind are at such a time the first of virtues. *Be ye perfect*, said the Founder of Christianity;

I count not myself to have apprehended, said its greatest Apostle. Perfection will never be reached; but to recognise a period of transformation when it comes and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable. No habits or attachments should prevent their trying to do this; nor indeed, in the long run, can they. Human thought, which made all institutions, inevitably saps them, resting only in that which is absolute and eternal.

MY COUNTRYMEN

About a year ago the *Saturday Review* published an article which gave me, as its articles often do give me, much food for reflection. The article was about the unjust estimate which, says the *Saturday Review*, I form of my countrymen, and about the indecency of talking of "British Philistines." It appears that I assume the truth of the transcendental system of philosophy, and then lecture my wiser countrymen because they will not join me in recognizing as eternal truths a set of platitudes which may be proved to be false. "Now there is in England a school of philosophy which thoroughly understands, and, on theoretical grounds, deliberately rejects, the philosophical theory which Mr. Arnold accuses the English nation of neglecting; and the practical efforts of the English people, especially their practical efforts in the way of criticism, are for the most part strictly in accordance with the principles of that philosophy."

I do not quite know what to say about the transcendental system of philosophy, for I am a mere dabbler in these great matters, and to grasp and hold a system of philosophy is a feat much beyond my strength; but I certainly did talk about British Philistines, and to call people Philistines when they are doing just what the wisest men in the country have settled to be quite right, does seem unreasonable, not to say indecent. Being really the most teachable man alive, I could not help making, after I had read the article in the *Saturday Review*, a serious return, as the French say, upon myself; and I resolved never to call my countrymen Philistines again till I had thought more about it, and could be quite sure I was not committing an indecency.

I was very much fortified in this good resolution by something else which happened about the same time.

[1] *Cornhill Magazine*, February 1866.

Every one knows that the heart of the English nation is its middle class; there had been a good deal of talk, a year ago, about the education of this class, and I, among others, had imagined it was not good, and that the middle class suffered by its not being better. But Mr. Bazley, the member for Manchester, who is a kind of representative of this class, made a speech last year at Manchester, the middle-class metropolis, which shook me a good deal. "During the last few months," said Mr. Bazley, "there had been a cry that middle-class education ought to receive more attention. He confessed himself very much surprised by the clamour that was raised. He did not think that class need excite the sympathy either of the legislature or the public." Much to the same effect spoke Mr. Miall, another middle-class leader, in the *Nonconformist*: "Middle-class education seems to be the favourite topic of the hour, and we must confess to a feeling of shame at the nonsense which is being uttered on the subject. It might be thought from what is said, that this section of the community, which has done everything else so well—which has astonished the world by its energy, enterprise, and self-reliance, which is continually striking out new paths of industry and subduing the forces of nature—cannot, from some mysterious reason, get their children properly educated." Still more strong were the words of the *Daily News* (I love to range all the evidence in black and white before me, though it tends to my own discomfiture) about the blunder some of us were making: "All the world knows that the great middle class of this country supplies the mind, the will, and the power for all the great and good things that have to be done, and it is not likely that that class should surrender its powers and privileges in the one case of the training of its own children. How the idea of such a scheme can have occurred to anybody, how it can have been imagined that parents and schoolmasters in the most independent, and active, and enlightened class of English society, how it can have been supposed that the class which has done all the great things that have been done in all departments, will beg the Government to send inspectors through its schools, when

it can itself command whatever advantages exist, might seem unintelligible but for two or three considerations." These considerations do not much matter just now; but it is clear how perfectly Mr. Bazley's stand was a stand such as it becomes a representative man like Mr. Bazley to make, and how well the *Daily Telegraph* might say of the speech: "It was at once grand, genial, national, and distinct;" and the *Morning Star* of the speaker: "He talked to his constituents as Manchester people like to be talked to, in the language of clear, manly intelligence, which penetrates through sophisms, ignores commonplaces, and gives to conventional illusions their true value. His speech was thoroughly instinct with that earnest good sense which characterizes Manchester, and which, indeed, may be fairly set down as the general characteristic of England and Englishmen everywhere."

Of course if Philistinism is characteristic of the British nation just now, it must in a special way be characteristic of the representative part of the British nation, the part by which the British nation is what it is, and does all its best things, the middle class. And the newspapers, who have so many more means than I of knowing the truth, and who have that trenchant, authoritative style for communicating it which makes so great an impression, say that the British middle class is characterized, not by Philistinism, but by enlightenment; by a passion for penetrating through sophisms, ignoring commonplaces, and giving to conventional illusions their true value. Evidently it is nonsense, as the *Daily News* says, to think that this great middle class which supplies the mind, the will, and the power for all the great and good things that have to be done, should want its schools, the nurseries of its admirable intelligence, meddled with. It may easily be imagined that all this, coming on the top of the *Saturday Review's* rebuke of me for indecency, was enough to set me meditating; and after a long and painful self-examination, I saw that I had been making a great mistake. I had been breaking one of my own cardinal rules: the rule to keep aloof from practice, and to confine myself to the slow and obscure work of trying to understand things,

to see them as they are. So I was suffering deservedly in being taunted with hawking about my nostrums of State-schools for a class much too wise to want them, and of an Academy for people who have an inimitable style already. To be sure, I had said that schools ought to be things of local, not State, institution and management, and that we ought not to have an Academy; but that makes no difference. I had been meddling with practice, proposing this and that, saying how it might be if we had established this or that. I saw what danger I had been running in thus intruding into a sphere where I have no business, and I resolved to offend in this way no more. Henceforward let Mr. Kinglake belabour the French as he will, let him describe as many tight merciless lips as he likes; henceforward let Educational Homes stretch themselves out in *The Times* to the crack of doom, let Lord Fortescue bewitch the middle class with ever new blandishments, let any number of Mansion House meetings propound any number of patchwork schemes to avoid facing the real difficulty; I am dumb. I let reforming and instituting alone; I meddle with my neighbour's practice no more. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

This I say as a sincere penitent; but I do not see that there is any harm in my still trying to know and understand things, if I keep humbly to that, and do not meddle with greater matters, which are out of my reach. So having once got into my head this notion of British Philistinism and of the want of clear and large intelligence in our middle class, I do not consider myself bound at once to put away and crush such a notion, as people are told to do with their religious doubts; nor, when the *Saturday Review* tells me that no nation in the world is so logical as the English nation, and the *Morning Star*, that our grand national characteristic is a clear intelligence which penetrates through sophisms, ignores commonplaces, and gives to conventional illusions their true value, do I feel myself compelled to receive these propositions with absolute sub-

mission as articles of faith, transcending reason; indeed, this would be transcendentalism, which the *Saturday Review* condemns. Canvass them, then, as mere matters of speculation, I may; and having lately had occasion to travel on the Continent for many months, during which I was thrown in company with a great variety of people, I remembered what Burns says of the profitableness of trying to see ourselves as others see us, and I kept on the watch for anything to confirm or contradict my old notion, in which, without absolutely giving it up, I had begun certainly to be much shaken and staggered.

I must say that the foreign opinion about us is not at all like that of the *Saturday Review* and the *Morning Star*. I know how madly the foreigners envy us, and that this must warp their judgment; I know, too, that this test of foreign opinion can never be decisive; I only take it for what it is worth, and as a contribution to our study of the matter in question. But I do really think that the admirers of our great middle class, which has, as its friends and enemies both agree, risen into such preponderating importance of late years, and now returns the House of Commons, dictates the policy of Ministers, makes the newspapers speak with its voice, and in short governs the country,—I do think, I say, the admirers of this great class would be astounded if they could hear how cavalierly a foreigner treats this country of their making and managing. "It is not so much that we dislike England," a Prussian official, with the graceful tact of his nation, said to me the other day, "as that we think little of her." The *Cologne Gazette*, perhaps the chief newspaper of Germany, published in the summer a series of letters, much esteemed, I believe, by military men, on the armies of the leading Continental powers. The writer was a German officer, but not a Prussian. Speaking of the false military system followed by the Emperor Nicholas, whose great aim was to turn his soldiers into perfectly drilled machines, and contrasting this with the free play left to the individual soldier in the French system: "In consequence of their purely mechanical training," says this writer, "the Russians, in spite of their splendid courage,

were in the Crimean war constantly beaten by the French, nay, decidedly beaten *even by the English and the Turks*." [1] Hardly a German newspaper can discuss territorial changes in Europe but it will add, after its remarks on the probable policy of France in this or that event: "England will probably make a fuss, but what England thinks is of no importance." I believe the German newspapers must keep a phrase of that kind stereotyped, they use it so often. France is our very good friend just now, but at bottom our "clear intelligence penetrating through sophisms," and so on, is not held in much more esteem there than in Germany. One of the gravest and most moderate of French newspapers — a newspaper, too, our very good friend, like France herself, into the bargain—broke out lately, when some jealousy of the proposed Cholera Commission in the East was shown on this side of the water, in terms which, though less rough than the "great fool" of the *Saturday Review*, were still far from flattering. "Let us speak to these English the only language they can comprehend. England lives for her trade; Cholera interrupts trade; therefore it is for England's interest to join in precautious against Cholera."

Compliments of this sort are displeasing to remember, displeasing to repeat; but their abundance strikes the attention; and then the happy unconsciousness of those at whom they are aimed, their state of imperturbable self-satisfaction, strikes the attention too, and makes an inquisitive mind quite eager to see its way clearly in this apparent game of cross purposes. For never, surely, was there such a game of cross purposes played. It came to its height when Lord Palmerston died the other day. Lord Palmerston was England; "the best type of our age and country," the *Times* well called him; he was "a great representative man, emphatically the English Minister;" the interpreter of the wishes of that great middle class of this country which supplies the mind, the will, and the power requisite for all the great and good things that have to be done, and therefore "acknowledged

[1] "Ja, selbst von den Engländern und Türken entschieden geschlagen."

by a whole people as their best impersonation." Monsieur Thiers says of Pitt, that though he used and abused the strength of England, she was the second country in the world at the time of his death, and the first eight years afterwards. That was after Waterloo and the triumphs of Wellington. And that era of primacy and triumphs, Lord Palmerston, say the English newspapers, has carried on to this hour. "What Wellington was as a soldier, that was Palmerston as a statesman." When I read these words in some foreign city or other, I could not help rubbing my eyes and asking myself if I was dreaming. Why, taking Lord Palmerston's career from 1830 (when he first became Foreign Secretary) to his death, there cannot be a shadow of doubt, for any one with eyes and ears in his head, that he found England the first power in the world's estimation, and that he leaves her the third, after France and the United States. I am no politician; I mean no disparagement at all to Lord Palmerston, to whose talents and qualities I hope I can do justice; and indeed it is not Lord Palmerston's policy, or any Minister's policy, that is in question here, it is the policy of all of us, it is the policy of England; for in a government such as ours is at present, it is only, as we are so often reminded, by interpreting public opinion, by being "the best type of his age and country," that a Minister governs; and Lord Palmerston's greatness lay precisely in our all "acknowledging him as our best impersonation." Well, then, to this our logic, our practical efforts in the way of criticism, our clear manly intelligence penetrating through sophisms and ignoring commonplaces, and above all, our redoubtable phalanx possessing these advantages in the highest degree, our great middle class, which makes Parliament, and which supplies the mind, the will, and the power requisite for all the great and good things that have to be done, have brought us: to the third place in the world's estimation, instead of the first. He who disbelieves it, let him go round to every embassy in Europe and ask if it is not true.

The foreigners, indeed, are in no doubt as to the real authors of the policy of modern England; they know that

ours is no longer a policy of Pitts and aristocracies, disposing of every movement of the hoodwinked nation to whom they dictate it; they know that our policy is now dictated by the strong middle part of England—England happy, as Mr. Lowe, quoting Aristotle, says, in having her middle part strong and her extremes weak; and that, though we are administered by one of our weak extremes, the aristocracy, these managers administer us, as a weak extreme naturally must, with a nervous attention to the wishes of the strong middle part, whose agents they are. It was not the aristocracy which made the Crimean war; it was the strong middle part—the constituencies. It was the strong middle part which showered abuse and threats on Germany for mishandling Denmark; and when Germany gruffly answered, *Come and stop us*, slapped its pockets, and vowed that it had never had the slightest notion of pushing matters so far as this. It was the strong middle part which, by the voice of its favourite newspapers, kept threatening Germany, after she had snapped her fingers at us, with a future chastisement from France, just as a smarting school-boy threatens his bully with a drubbing to come from some big boy in the background. It was the strong middle part, speaking through the same newspapers, which was full of coldness, slights, and sermons for the American Federals during their late struggle; and as soon as they had succeeded, discovered that it had always wished them well, and that nothing was so much to be desired as that the United States, and we, should be the fastest friends possible. Some people will say that the aristocracy was an equal offender in this respect: very likely: but the behaviour of the strong middle part makes more impression than the behaviour of a weak extreme; and the more so, because from the middle class, their fellows in numberless ways, the Americans expected sympathy, while from the aristocracy they expected none. And, in general, the faults with which foreigners reproach us in the matters named—rash engagement, intemperate threatening, undignified retreat, ill-timed cordiality—are not the faults of an aristocracy, by nature in such concerns prudent, reticent,

dignified, sensitive on the point of honour; they are rather the faults of a rich middle class—testy, absolute, ill acquainted with foreign matters, a little ignoble, very dull to perceive when it is making itself ridiculous.

I know the answer one gets at home when one says that England is not very highly considered just now on the Continent. There is first of all the envy to account for it—that of course; and then our clear intelligence is making a radical change in our way of dealing with the Continent; the old, bad, aristocratical policy of incessantly intermeddling with the affairs of the Continent—this it is getting rid of; it is leaving the miserable foreigners to themselves, to their wars, despotisms, bureaucracy, and hatred of free, prosperous England. A few inconveniences may arise before the transition from our old policy to our new is fairly accomplished, and we quite leave off the habit of meddling where our own interests are not at stake. We may be exposed to a little mortification in the passage, but our clear intelligence will discern any occasion where our interests are really at stake. Then we shall come forward and prove ourselves as strong as ever; and the foreigners, in spite of their envy, know it. But what strikes me so much in all which these foreigners say is, that it is just this clear intelligence of ours that they appear at the present moment to hold cheap. Englishmen are often heard complaining of the little gratitude foreign nations show them for their sympathy, their good-will. The reason is, that the foreigners think that an Englishman's good-will to a foreign cause, or dislike to it, is never grounded in a perception of its real merits and bearings, but in some chance circumstance. They say the Englishman never, in these cases, really comprehends the situation, and so they can never feel him to be in living sympathy with them. I have got into much trouble for calling my countrymen Philistines, and all through these remarks I am determined never to use that word; but I wonder if there can be anything offensive in calling one's countryman a young man from the country. I hope not; and if not, I should say, for the benefit of those who have seen Mr. John

Parry's amusing entertainment, that England and Englishmen, holding forth on some great crisis in a foreign country—Poland, say, or Italy—are apt to have on foreigners very much the effect of the young man from the country who talks to the nursemaid after she has upset the perambulator. There is a terrible crisis, and the discourse of the young man from the country, excellent in itself, is felt not to touch the crisis vitally. Nevertheless, on he goes; the perambulator lies a wreck, the child screams, the nursemaid wrings her hands, the old gentleman storms, the policeman gesticulates, the crowd thickens; still, that astonishing young man talks on, serenely unconscious that he is not at the centre of the situation.

Happening to be much thrown with certain foreigners who criticised England in this sort of way, I used often to think what a short and ready way one of our hard-hitting English newspapers would take with these scorners, if they fell into its hands. But being myself a mere seeker for truth, with nothing trenchant or authoritative about me, I could do no more than look shocked and begin to ask questions. "What!" I said, "you hold the England of to-day cheap, and declare that we do not comprehend the situation; yet you rate the England of 1815 so high, and call our fathers and grandfathers the foremost people in Europe. Did they comprehend the situation better than we?" "Yes," replied my foreign friends, "the situation as they had it, a great deal better. Their time was a time for energy, and they succeeded in it, perfectly. Our time is a time for intelligence, and you are not succeeding in it at all."

Though I could not hear without a shudder this insult to the earnest good sense which, as the *Morning Star* says, may be fairly set down as the general characteristic of England and Englishmen everywhere, yet I pricked up my ears when my companions talked of energy, and England's success in a time for energy, because I have always had a notion myself that energy—energy with honesty—is England's great force; a greater force to her, even, than her talent for penetrating through sophisms

and ignoring commonplaces; so I begged my acquaintances to explain a little more fully to me what they meant. "Nothing can be clearer," they answered. "Your *Times* was telling you the other day, with the enlightenment it so often shows at present, that instead of being proud of Waterloo and the great war which was closed by it, it really seemed as if you ought rather to feel embarrassed at the recollection of them, since the policy for which they were fought is grown obsolete; the world has taken a turn which was not Lord Castlereagh's, and to look back on the great Tory war is to look back upon an endless account of blood and treasure wasted. Now, that is not so at all. What France had in her head, from the Convention, 'faithful to the principles of the sovereignty of the people, which will not permit them to acknowledge anywhere the institutions militating against it,' to Napoleon, with his 'immense projects for assuring to France the empire of the world'—what she had in her head, along with many better and sounder notions destined to a happier fortune, was *supremacy*. She had always a vision of a sort of federation of the States of Europe under the primacy of France. Now to this the world, whose progress no doubt lies in the direction of more concert and common purpose among nations, but these nations free, self-impelled, and living each its own life, was not moving. Whoever knocks to pieces a scheme of this sort does the world a service. In antiquity, Roman empire had a scheme of this sort, and much more. The barbarians knocked it to pieces;—honour to the barbarians. In the middle ages Frederick the Second had a scheme of this sort. The Papacy knocked it to pieces;—honour to the Papacy. In our own century, France had a scheme of this sort. Your fathers knocked it to pieces;—honour to your fathers. They were just the people to do it. They had a vigorous lower class, a vigorous middle class, and a vigorous aristocracy. The lower class worked and fought, the middle class found the money, and the aristocracy wielded the whole. This aristocracy was high-spirited, reticent, firm, despising frothy declamation. It had all the qualities useful for its

task and time; Lord Grenville's words, as early as 1793: 'England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, the political system of Europe'—these few words, with their lofty strength, contain, as one may say, the prophecy of future success; you hear the very voice of an aristocracy standing on sure ground, and with the stars in its favour. Well, you succeeded, and in 1815, after Waterloo, you were the first power in Europe. 'These people have a secret,' we all said; 'they have discerned the way the world was going, and therefore they have prevailed; while, on the other hand, the "stars in their courses fought against Sisera."' We held you in the greatest respect; we tried to copy your constitutional government; we read your writers. 'After the peace,' says George Sand, 'the literature of Great Britain crossed the straits, and came to reign amongst us.' It reigned in Byron and Scott, voices of the great aristocratical spirit which had just won the victory: Scott expressing its robust, genial conservatism, holding by a thousand roots to the past; Byron its defiant force and indomitable pride.

"We believed in you for a good while; but gradually it began to dawn upon us that the era for which you had had the secret was over, and that a new era, for which you had not the secret, was beginning. The work of the old era was to prevent the formation of a second Roman empire, and to maintain a store of free, rich, various national lives for the future to work with and bring to harmony. This was a work of force, of energy: it was a work for an aristocratical power, since, as you yourself are always saying, aristocracies, poor in ideas, are rich in energy. You were a great aristocratical power, and did it. But then came an era with another work, a work of which it is the great glory of the French Revolution (pardon us for saying so, we know it makes some of your countrymen angry to hear it) passionately to have embraced the idea: the work of making human life, hampered by a past which it has outgrown, natural and rational. This is a work of intelligence, and in intelligence an

aristocratic power, as you know, does not so much shine. Accordingly, since the world has been steadily moving this way, you seem to have lost your secret, and we are gradually ceasing to believe in you. You will say, perhaps, that England is no longer an aristocratical power, but a middle-class power, wielded by an industrial middle class, as the England of your fathers was wielded by a territorial aristocracy. This may be so; and indeed, as the style, carriage, and policy of England have of late years been by no means those of an aristocratical power, it probably is so. But whatever class dictates it, your course, allow us to say, has not of late years been intelligent; has not, at any rate, been successful. And depend upon it, a nation who has the secret of her era, who discerns which way the world is going, is successful, keeps rising. Can you yourselves, with all your powers of self-satisfaction, suppose that the Crimean war raised you, or that your Indian mutiny raised you, or that your attitude in the Italian war raised you, as your performances at the beginning of the century raised you? Surely you cannot. You held your own, if you will; you showed tenacity; you saved yourselves from disaster; but you did not raise yourselves, did not advance one jot. Can you, on the other hand, suppose that your attitude in the Danish business, in the American business, has not lowered you? You are losing the instinct which tells people how the world is going; you are beginning to make mistakes; you are falling out of the front rank. The era of aristocracies is over; nations must now stand or fall by the intelligence of their middle class and their people. The people with you is still an embryo; no one can yet quite say what it will come to. You lean, therefore, with your whole weight upon the intelligence of your middle class. And intelligence, in the true sense of the word, your middle class has absolutely none."

I was aghast. I thought of this great class, every morning and evening extolled for its clear, manly intelligence by a hundred vigorous and influential writers; and though the fine enthusiasm of these writers had always

seemed to me to be carrying them a little too far, and I had even been guilty of the indecency of now and then calling my countrymen Philistines, these foreign critics struck me as passing all bounds, and quite out-Heroding Herod. Fortunately I had just received from England a copy of Mr. Lowe's powerful and much-admired speech against Reform. I took it out of my pocket. "Now," said I to my envious, carping foreigners, "just listen to me. You say that the early years of this century were a time for energy, and we did well in them; you say that the last thirty or forty years have been a time for intelligence, and we have done ill in them. Mr. Lowe shall answer you. Here is his reading of our last thirty or forty years' history, as made by our middle-class Parliament, as he calls it; by a Parliament, therefore, filled by the mind and will of this great class whose rule you disparage. Mr. Lowe says: 'The seven Houses of Commons that have sate since the Reform Bill have performed exploits unrivalled, not merely in the six centuries during which Parliament has existed, but in the whole history of representative assemblies.' He says: 'Look at the noble work, the heroic work which the House of Commons has performed within these thirty-five years. It has gone through and revised every institution of the country; it has scanned our trade, our colonies, our laws, and our municipal institutions; everything that was complained of, everything that had grown distasteful, has been touched with success and moderation by the amending hand. And to such a point have these amendments been carried, that when gentlemen come to argue this question, and do all in their power to get up a practical grievance, they fail in suggesting even one.' There is what Mr. Lowe says. You see we have nothing left to desire, absolutely nothing. As Mr. Lowe himself goes on: 'With all this continued peace, contentment, happiness, and prosperity—England in its present state of development and civilisation—the mighty fabric of English prosperity —what can we want more?' Evidently nothing! therefore to propose 'for England to make a step in the direction of democracy is the strangest and wildest proposition

ever broached by man.' People talk of America. 'In America the working classes are the masters; does anybody doubt that?' And compare, Mr. Lowe means, England, as the middle class is making her, with America, as the working classes are making her. How entirely must the comparison turn to the advantage of the English middle class! Then, finally, as to the figure we cut in the eyes of the world, our grandeur and our future, here is a crowning sentence, worthy of Lord Macaulay himself, whose style Mr. Lowe enthusiastically admires: '*The destiny of England is in the great heart of England!*'"

Mr. Bright had not then made his famous speech about the misdeeds of the Tories, but, if he had, I should certainly have added that our middle class, by these unrivalled exploits of theirs, had not only raised their country to an unprecedented height of greatness, but had also saved our foolish and obstructive aristocracy from being emptied into the Thames.

As it was, however, what I had urged, or rather what I had borrowed from Mr. Lowe, seemed to me exceedingly forcible, and I looked anxiously for its effect on my hearers. They did not appear so much disconcerted as I had hoped. "Undoubtedly," they said, "the coming of your middle class to power was a natural, salutary event, to be blessed, not anathematized. Aristocracies cannot deal with a time for intelligence; their sense is for facts, not ideas. The world of ideas is the possible, the future; the world of aristocracies is the established, the past, which has made their fortune, and which they hope to prolong. No doubt your middle class found a great deal of commercial and social business waiting to be done, which your aristocratic governments had left undone, and had no talents for doing. Their talents were for other times and tasks; for curbing the power of the Crown when other classes were too inconsiderable to do it; for managing (if one compares them with other aristocracies) their affairs and their dependents with vigour, prudence, and moderation, during the feudal and patriarchal stage of society; for wielding the force of their country against foreign powers with energy, firmness, and dignity. But

then came the modern spirit, the modern time; the notion, as we say, of making human life more natural and rational—or, as your philosophers say, of getting the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Have you succeeded, are you succeeding, in this hour of the many, as your aristocracy succeeded in the hour of the few? You say you are: you point to 'the noble work, the heroic work which the House of Commons has performed within these last thirty-five years; everything that was complained of, everything that had grown distasteful, has been touched with success and moderation by the amending hand.' Allow us to set clap-trap on one side; we are not at one of your public meetings. What is the modern problem? to make human life, the life of society, all through, more natural and rational; to have the greatest possible number of one's nation happy. Here is the standard by which we are to try ourselves and one another now, as national grandeur, in the old regal and aristocratical conception of it, was the standard formerly. Every nation must have wished to be England, in 1815, tried by the old standard: must we all wish to be England, in 1865, tried by the new standard? Your aristocracy, you say, is as splendid, as fortunate, as enviable as ever: very likely; but all the world cannot be aristocracy. What do you make of the mass of your society, of its vast middle and lower portion? Are we to envy you your common people; is our common people to wish to change places with yours; are we to say that you, more than we, have the modern secret here? Without insisting too much on the stories of misery and degradation which are perpetually reaching us, we will say that no one can mix with a great crowd in your country, no one can walk with his eyes and ears open through the poor quarters of your large towns, and not feel that your common people, as it meets one's eyes, is at present more raw, to say the very least, less enviable-looking, further removed from civilized and humane life, than the common people almost anywhere. Well, then, you are not a success, according to the modern standard, with your common people. Are you a success with your middle class? They

have the power now; what have they made of themselves? what sort of a life is theirs? A life more natural, more rational, fuller of happiness, more enviable, therefore, than the life of the middle classes on the Continent? Yes, you will say, because the English middle class is the most industrious and the richest. But it is just here that you go a great deal too fast, and so deceive yourselves. What brings about, or rather tends to bring about, a natural rational life, satisfying the modern spirit? This: the growth of a love of industry, trade, and wealth; the growth of a love of the things of the mind; and the growth of a love of beautiful things. There are body, intelligence, and soul all taken care of. Of these three factors of modern life, your middle class has no notion of any but one, the first. Their love of industry, trade, and wealth is certainly prodigious; and their example has done us a great deal of good; we, too, are beginning to get this love, and we wanted it. But what notion have they of anything else? Do but look at them, look at their lives. Some of us know your middle class very well; a great deal better than your own upper class in general knows them. Your middle class is educated, to begin with, in the worst schools of your country, and our middle class is educated in the best of ours. What becomes of them after that? The fineness and capacity of a man's spirit is shown by his enjoyments; your middle class has an enjoyment in its business, we admit, and gets on well in business, and makes money; but beyond that? Drugged with business, your middle class seems to have its sense blunted for any stimulus besides, except religion; it has a religion, narrow, unintelligent, repulsive. All sincere religion does something for the spirit, raises a man out of the bondage of his merely bestial part, and saves him; but the religion of your middle class is the very lowest form of intelligential life which one can imagine as saving. What other enjoyments have they? The newspapers, a sort of eating and drinking which are not to our taste, a literature of books almost entirely religious or semi-religious, books utterly unreadable by an educated class anywhere, but which your middle class consumes, they

say, by the hundred thousand; and in their evenings, for a great treat, a lecture on teetotalism or nunneries. Can any life be imagined more hideous, more dismal, more unenviable? Compare it with the life of our middle class as you have seen it on the Rhine this summer, or at Lausanne, or Zurich. The world of enjoyment, so liberalizing and civilizing, belongs to the middle classes there, as well as the world of business; the whole world is theirs, they possess life; in England the highest class seems to have the monopoly of the world of enjoyment, the middle class enjoys itself, as your Shakespeare would say, in hugger-mugger, and possesses life only by reading in the newspapers, which it does devoutly, the doings of great people. Well, then, we do not at all want to be as your middle class: we want to learn from it to do business and to get rich, and this we are learning a great deal faster than you think; but we do not, like your middle class, fix our consummation here: we have a notion of a whole world besides, not dreamed of in your middle class's philosophy; so they, too, like your common people, seem to us no success. They may be the masters of the modern time with you, but they are not solving its problem. They cannot see the way the world is going, and the future does not belong to them. Talk of the present state of development and civilization of England, meaning England as they represent it to us! Why, the capital, pressing danger of England, is the barbarism of her middle class; the civilization of her middle class is England's capital, pressing want."

"Well, but," said I, still catching at Mr. Lowe's powerful help, "the Parliament of this class has performed exploits unrivalled not merely in the six centuries during which Parliament has existed, but in the whole history of representative assemblies. The exploits are there; all the reforms we have made in the last five-and-thirty years."

"Let us distinguish," replied the envious foreigners, "let us distinguish. We named three powers—did we not?—which go to spread that rational humane life which is the aim of modern society: the love of wealth, the love

of intelligence, the love of beauty. Your middle class, we agreed, has the first; its commercial legislation, accordingly, has been very good, and in advance of that of foreign countries. Not that free-trade was really brought about by your middle class: it was brought about, as important reforms always are, by two or three great men. However, let your middle class, which had the sense to accept free-trade, have the credit of it. But this only brings us a certain way. The legislation of your middle class in all that goes to give human life more intelligence and beauty is no better than was to be expected from its own want of both. It is nothing to say that its legislation in these respects is an improvement upon what you had before; that is not the question; you are holding up its achievements as absolutely admirable, as unrivalled, as a model to us. You may have done — for you — much for religious toleration, social improvement, public instruction, municipal reform, law reform; but the French Revolution and its consequences have done, upon the Continent, a great deal more. Such a spectacle as your Irish Church Establishment you cannot find in France or Germany. Your Irish land-question you hardly dare to face: Stein settled as threatening a land-question in Prussia. Of the schools for your middle class we have already spoken; while these schools are what they are, while the schools for your poor are maintained in the expensive, unjust, irrational way they are, England is full of endowments and foundations, capable by themselves, if properly applied, of putting your public education on a much better footing. In France and Germany all similar funds are thus employed, having been brought under public responsible management; in England they are left to private irresponsible management, and are, in nine cases out of ten, wasted. You talk of municipal reform; and cities and the manner of life in them have, for the modern business of promoting a more rational and humane life in the great body of the community, incalculable importance. Do you suppose we should tolerate in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, your London corporation and London vestries, and London as they

make it? In your provincial towns you do better; but even there, do the municipalities show a tenth part either of the intelligence or the care for the ends, as we have laid them down, of modern society, that our municipalities show? Your middle-class man thinks it the highest pitch of development and civilization when his letters are carried twelve times a day from Islington to Camberwell, and from Camberwell to Islington, and if railway trains run to and fro between them every quarter of an hour. He thinks it is nothing that the trains only carry him from an illiberal, dismal life at Islington to an illiberal, dismal life at Camberwell; and the letters only tell him that such is the life there. A Swiss burgher takes Heaven knows how many hours to go from Berne to Geneva, and his trains are very few; this is an extreme on the other side; but compare the life the Swiss burgher finds or leaves at Berne or Geneva with the life of the middle class in your English towns. Or else you think to cover everything by saying: 'We are free! we are free! Our newspapers can say what they like!' Freedom, like Industry, is a very good horse to ride;—but to ride somewhere. You seem to think that you have only got to get on the back of your horse Freedom, or your horse Industry, and to ride away as hard as you can, to be sure of coming to the right destination. If your newspapers can say what they like, you think you are sure of being well advised. That comes of your inaptitude for ideas, and aptitude for clap-trap; you can never see the two sides of a question; never perceive that every human state of things, even a good one, has its inconveniences. We can see the conveniences of your state well enough, and the inconveniences of ours; of newspapers not free, and prefects over-busy; and there are plenty of us who proclaim them. You eagerly repeat after us all we say that redounds to your own honour and glory; but you never follow our example yourselves. You are full of acuteness to perceive the ill influence of our prefects on us; but if any one says to you, in your turn: 'The English system of a great landed aristocracy keeps your lower class a lower class for ever, and materialises and

vulgarises your whole middle class'—you stare vacantly at the speaker, you cannot even take in his ideas; you can only blurt forth, in reply, some clap-trap or other about a 'system of such tried and tested efficiency as no other country was ever happy enough to possess since the world was a world.'"

I have observed in my travels, that most young gentlemen of our highest class go through Europe, from Calais to Constantinople, with one sentence on their lips, and one idea in their minds, which suffices, apparently, to explain all that they see to them: *Foreigners don't wash.* No doubt, thought I to myself, my friends have fallen in with some distinguished young Britons of this sort, and had their feelings wounded by them; hence their rancour against our aristocracy. And as to our middle class, foreigners have no notion how much this class, with us, contains; how many shades and gradations in it there are, and how little what is said of one part of it will apply to another. Something of this sort I could not help urging aloud. "You do not know," I said, "that there is broken off, as one may say, from the top of our middle class, a large fragment, which receive the best education the country can give, the same education as our aristocracy; which is perfectly intelligent and which enjoys life perfectly. These men do the main part of our intellectual work, write all our best newspapers; and cleverer people, I assure you, are nowhere to be found."

"Clever enough," was the answer, "but they show not much intelligence, in the true sense of the word—not much intelligence of the way the world is going. Whether it is that they must try to hit your current public opinion, which is not intelligent; whether it is that, having been, as you say, brought up with your aristocracy, they have been too much influenced by it, have taken, half insensibly, an aristocracy's material standard, and do not believe in ideas; certain it is that their intelligence has no ardour, no plan, leads them nowhere; it is ineffectual. Your intellect is at this moment, to an almost unexampled degree, without influence on the intellect of Europe."

While this was being said, I noticed an Italian, who

was one of our party, fumbling with his pocket-book, from whence he presently produced a number of grey newspaper slips, which I could see were English. "Now just listen to me for a moment," he cried, "and I will show you what makes us say, on the Continent, that you English have no sense for logic, for ideas, and that your praise and blame, having no substantial foundation, are worth very little. You remember the famous French pamphlet before our war began in 1859: *Napoleon the Third and Italy*. The pamphlet appealed, in the French way, to reason and first principles; the upshot of it was this: 'The treaties which bind governments would be invariable only if the world was immovable. A power which should intrench itself behind treaties in order to resist modifications demanded by general feeling would have doubtless on her side an acquired right, but she would have against her moral right and universal conscience.' You English, on the other hand, took your stand on things as they were: 'If treaties are made,' said your *Times*, 'they must be respected. Tear one, and all are waste paper.' Very well; this is a policy, at any rate, an aristocratical policy; much may be said for it. The *Times* was full of contempt for the French pamphlet, an essay, as it called it, 'conveying the dreams of an agitator expressed in the language of an academician.' It said: 'No one accustomed to the pithy comments with which liberty notices passing history, can read such a production without complacency that he does not live in the country which produces it. To see the heavy apparatus of an essay brought out to solve a question on which men have corresponded and talked and speculated in the funds, and acted in the most practical manner possible for a month past, is as strange as if we beheld some spectral review,' and so on. Still very well; there is the strong practical man despising theories and reveries. 'The sentiment of race is just now threatening to be exceedingly troublesome. It is to a considerable extent in our days a literary revival.' That is all to the same effect. Then came a hitch in our affairs, and fortune seemed as if she was going to give, as she often does give, the anti-theorists a triumph. 'The Italian plot,' cried

The Times, 'has failed. The Emperor and his familiars knew not the moral strength which is still left in the enlightened communities of Europe. To the unanimous and indignant reprobation of English opinion is due the failure of the imperial plots. While silence and fear reign everywhere abroad, the eyes and ears of the Continent are turned continually to these islands. English opinion has been erected into a kind of Areopagus.' Our business went forward again, and your English opinion grew very stern indeed. 'Sardinia,' said *The Times,* 'is told very plainly that she has deserted the course by which alone she could hope either to be happy or great, and abandoned herself to the guidance of fatal delusions, which are luring her on to destruction. By cultivating the arts of peace she would have been solving, in the only possible way, the difficult problem of Italian independence. She has been taught by France to look instead to the acquisition of fresh territory by war and conquest. She has now been told with perfect truth by the warning voice of the British parliament that she has not a moment to lose in retracing her steps, if indeed her penitence be not too late.' Well, to make a long story short, we did not retrace our steps; we went on, as you know; we succeeded; and now let us make a jump from the spring to the autumn. Here is your unanimous English opinion, here is your Areopagus, here is your *Times,* in October: 'It is very irregular (Sardinia's course), it is contrary to all diplomatic forms. Francis the Second can show a thousand texts of international law against it. Yes; but there are extremities beyond all law, and there are laws which existed before even society was formed. There are laws which are implanted in our nature, and which form part of the human mind,' and so on. Why, here you have entirely boxed the compass and come round from the aristocratical programme to the programme of the French pamphlet, 'the dreams of an agitator in the language of an academician!' And you approved not only our present but our past, and kindly took off your ban of reprobation issued in February. 'How great a change has been effected by the wisely courageous policy of Sardinia! The firmness and bold-

ness which have raised Italy from degradation form the enduring character of a ten years' policy. King Victor Emmanuel and his sagacious counsellor have achieved success by remembering that fortune favours the bold.' There you may see why the mind of France influences the Continent so much and the mind of England so little. France has intelligence enough to perceive the ideas that are moving, or are likely to move, the world; she believes in them, sticks to them, and shapes her course to suit them. You neither perceive them nor believe in them, but you play with them like counters, taking them up and laying them down at random, and following really some turn of your imagination, some gust of liking or disliking. When I heard some of your countrymen complaining of Italy and her ingratitude for English sympathy, I made, to explain it, the collection of those extracts and of a good many more. They are all at your service; I have some here from the *Saturday Review*, which you will find exactly follow suit with those from *The Times*." "No, thank you," I answered. "*The Times* is enough. My relations with the *Saturday Review* are rather tight-stretched, as you say here, already; make me a party to none of your quarrels with them."

After this my original tormentor once more took up his parable. "You see now what I meant," he said, "by saying that you did better in the old time, in the day of aristocracies. An aristocracy has no ideas, but it has a policy—to resist change. In this policy it believes, it sticks to it; when it is beaten in it, it holds its tongue. This is respectable, at any rate. But your great middle class, as you call it, your present governing power, having no policy, except that of doing a roaring trade, does not know what to be at in great affairs—blows hot and cold by turns—makes itself ridiculous, in short. It was a good aristocratical policy to have helped Austria in the Italian war; it was a good aristocratical policy to have helped the South in the American war. The days of aristocratical policy are over for you; with your new middle-class public opinion you cut, in Italy, the figure our friend here has just shown you; in America you scold

right and left, you get up a monster memorial to deprecate the further effusion of blood; you lament over the abridgment of civil liberty by people engaged in a struggle for life and death, and meaning to win; and when they turn a deaf ear to you and win, you say, 'Oh, now let us be one great united Anglo-Saxon family and astonish the world!' This is just of a piece with your threatening Germany with the emperor of the French. Do you not see that all these blunders dispose the Americans, who are very shrewd, and who have been succeeding as steadily as you have been failing, to answer: 'We have got the lead, no thanks to you, and we mean to astonish the world without you'? Unless you change, unless your middle class grows more intelligent, you will tell upon the world less and less, and end by being a second Holland. We do not hold you cheap for saying you will wash your hands of all concerns but your own, that you do not care a rush for influence in Europe; though this sentence of your Lord Bolingbroke is true: 'The opinion of mankind, which is fame after death, is superior strength and power in life.' We hold you cheap because you show so few signs, except in the one department of industry, of understanding your time and its tendencies, and of exhibiting a modern life which shall be a signal success. And the reaction is the stronger because, after 1815, we believed in you as nowadays we are coming to believe in America. You had won the last game, and we thought you had your hand full of trumps, and were going to win the next. Now the game has begun to be played, and we have an inkling of what your cards are; we shrewdly suspect you have scarcely any trumps at all."

I am no arguer, as is well known, "and every puny whipster gets my sword." So, instead of making bad worse by a lame answer, I held my tongue, consoling myself with the thought that these foreigners get from us, at any rate, plenty of Rolands for any stray Oliver they may have the luck to give us. I have since meditated a good deal on what was then said, but I cannot profess to be yet quite clear about it. However, all due deductions made for envy, exaggeration, and injustice, enough

stuck by me of these remarks on our logic, criticism, and love of intelligence, to determine me to go on trying (taking care, of course, to steer clear of indecency) to keep my mind fixed on these, instead of singing hosannahs to our actual state of development and civilisation. The old recipe, to think a little more and bustle a little less, seemed to me still the best recipe to follow. So I take comfort when I find the *Guardian* reproaching me with having no influence; for I know what influence means—a party, practical proposals, action; and I say to myself: "Even suppose I could get some followers, and assemble them, brimming with affectionate enthusiasm, in a committee-room at some inn; what on earth should I say to them? what resolutions could I propose? I could only propose the old Socratic commonplace, *Know thyself;* and how black they would all look at that!" No; to inquire, perhaps too curiously, what that present state of English development and civilisation is, which according to Mr. Lowe is so perfect that to give votes to the working class is stark madness; and, on the other hand, to be less sanguine about the divine and saving effect of a vote on its possessor than my friends in the committee-room at the "Spotted Dog"—that is my inevitable portion. To bring things under the light of one's intelligence, to see how they look there, to accustom oneself simply to regard the Marylebone Vestry, or the Educational Home, or the Irish Church Establishment, or our railway management, or our Divorce Court, or our gin-palaces open on Sunday and the Crystal Palace shut, as absurdities—that is, I am sure, invaluable exercise for us just at present. Let all persist in it who can, and steadily set their desires on introducing, with time, a little more soul and spirit into the too, too solid flesh of English society.

I have a friend who is very sanguine, in spite of the dismal croakings of these foreigners, about the turn things are even now taking amongst us. "Mean and ignoble as our middle class looks," he says, "it has this capital virtue, it has seriousness. With frivolity, cultured or uncultured, you can do nothing; but with seriousness there is always hope. Then, too, the present bent of the world towards

amusing itself, so perilous to the highest class, is curative and good for our middle class. A piano in a Quaker's drawing-room is a step for him to more humane life; nay, perhaps, even the penny gaff of the poor East Londoner is a step for him to more humane life; it is—what example shall we choose? it is *Strathmore*, let us say—it is the one-pound-eleven-and-sixpenny gaff of the young gentlemen of the clubs and the young ladies of Belgravia, that is for them but a step in the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. Besides, say what you like of the idealessness of aristocracies, the vulgarity of our middle class, the immaturity of our lower, and the poor chance which a happy type of modern life has between them, consider this: Of all that makes life liberal and humane—of light, of ideas, of culture—every man in every class of society who has a dash of genius in him is the born friend. By his bringing up, by his habits, by his interest, he may be their enemy; by the primitive, unalterable complexion of his nature, he is their friend. Therefore, the movement of the modern spirit will be more and more felt among us, it will spread, it will prevail. Nay," this enthusiast often continues, getting excited as he goes on, "*The Times* itself, which so stirs some people's indignation—what is *The Times* but a gigantic Sancho Panza, to borrow a phrase of your friend Heine; a gigantic Sancho Panza, following by an attraction he cannot resist that poor, mad, scorned, suffering, sublime enthusiast, the modern spirit; following it, indeed, with constant grumbling, expostulation, and opposition, with airs of protection, of compassionate superiority, with an incessant byplay of nods, shrugs, and winks addressed to the spectators; following it, in short, with all the incurable recalcitrancy of a lower nature, but still following it?" When my friend talks thus I always shake my head, and say that this sounds very like the transcendentalism which has already brought me into so many scrapes.

I have another friend, again (and I am grown so cowed by all the rebuke my original speculations have drawn upon me that I find myself more and more filling the part of a mere listener), who calls himself Anglo-Saxon rather

than English, and this is what he says: "We are a small country," he says, "and our middle class has, as you say, not much gift for anything but making money. Our freedom and wealth have given us a great start, our capital will give us for a long time an advantage; but as other countries grow better governed and richer, we must necessarily sink to the position to which our size, and our want of any eminent gift for telling upon the world spiritually, doom us. But look at America; it is the same race; whether we are first or they, Anglo-Saxonism triumphs. You used to say that they had all the Philistinism of the English middle class from which they spring, and a great many faults of their own besides. But you noticed, too, that, blindly as they seemed following in general the star of their god Buncombe, they showed, at the same time, a feeling for ideas, a vivacity and play of mind, which our middle class has not, and which comes to the Americans, probably, from their democratic life, with its ardent hope, its forward stride, its gaze fixed on the future. Well, since these great events have lately come to purge and form them, how is this intelligence of theirs developing itself? Now they are manifesting a quick sense to see how the world is really going, and a sure faith, indispensable to all nations that are to be great, that greatness is only to be reached by going that way and no other. And then, if you talk of culture, look at the culture their middle, and even their working class is getting, as compared with the culture ours are getting. The trash which circulates by the hundred thousand among our middle class has no readers in America; our rubbish is for home-consumption; all our best books, books which are read here only by the small educated class, are in America the books of the great reading public. So over there they will advance spiritually as well as materially; and if our race at last flowers to modern life there, and not here, does it so much matter?" So says my friend, who is, as I premised, a devotee of Anglo-Saxonism; I, who share his pious frenzy but imperfectly, do not feel quite satisfied with these plans of vicarious greatness, and have a longing for this old and great country

of ours to be always great in herself, not only in her progeny. So I keep looking at her, and thinking of her; and as often as I consider how history is a series of waves, coming gradually to a head and then breaking, and that, as the successive waves come up, one nation is seen at the top of this wave, and then another of the next, I ask myself, counting all the waves which have come up with England at the top of them: When the great wave which is now mounting has come up, will she be at the top of it? *Illa nihil, nec me quærentem vana moratur!*—

> Yes, we arraign her; but she,
> The weary Titan, with deaf
> Ears, and labour-dimm'd eyes,
> Regarding neither to right
> Nor left, goes passively by,
> Staggering on to her goal;
> Bearing, on shoulders immense,
> Atlantéan, the load,
> Wellnigh not to be borne,
> Of the too vast orb of her fate.

APPENDIX A

TWO ARTICLES BY LORD STRANGFORD

I.—MR. ARNOLD ON CELTIC LITERATURE

March 19, 1866.

We have been waiting for a week or two in hopes that some adequate notice of Mr. Matthew Arnold's remarkable paper on Celtic Literature might have been taken by an authority competent to deal with the subject as a master. There is doubtless no great novelty in the view that the English nation is destined to be affected beneficially by some considerable infusion of the artistic and imaginative faculty through a more complete incorporation of the various Celtic fragments, existing within its bosom, which it has been absorbing and has yet to absorb. But this has always been put in a merely rhetorical and suggestive way, or in a bare dry ethnological way, and without the remotest reference to the actual nature and extent of that faculty as possessed and manifested in detail by the Celts. It has been reserved for Mr. Arnold to deduce this conclusion legitimately from a true knowledge of the Celtic ideals obtained by a direct study of the highest and most standard works on Celtic literature. And there is the greatest novelty in boldly challenging public attention and admiration on behalf of these ideals from an independent point of view. Mr. Arnold's style needs no laudation at our hands, nor do his special opinions require any exposition. It is not difficult to construct his argument out of his previous writings, nor to imagine the contrast between the Celtic children of light and the Saxon Philistines which may be assumed to pervade the present essay, without even taking the trouble of cutting the leaves. We presume everybody has read it; otherwise we might say that anybody might thus write its main argument for himself. We may further say that, even if he did that alone, he would be very

much the better for so doing; so entirely do we concur in the conclusions to which Mr. Arnold is led, in some measure no doubt by the spirit of antipathy, but in a far greater measure by the keen instinct of a just and long-withheld sympathy. But Mr. Arnold, so far from meeting with the criticism of appreciation or depreciation, has hardly met with any notice at all. His subject is new and just now appropriate, and it is represented in a way both original and striking. We consider that it requires some notice, and that any notice is better than no notice. We are but as proselytes of the gate ourselves in Celtic matters, with no authoritative knowledge of Celtic details, yet we feel moved to hazard a brief remark or two in the present case, more with the intention of assisting Mr. Arnold than of criticising him. Celtic literature, indeed, and the study of the Celtic past—we may as well say all Celtic questions, past, present, and to come—bear much resemblance to the face of nature in a Celtic landscape. There is fair display of cultivated ground, in which it is the fertility of the soil which strikes the eye rather than the art of the cultivator or the bounty of the crop; there is the wild alternation of mountain and lake and sea, and there are the dreariest stretches of bog and moor and swamp, impracticable and interminable. It is given to very few to traverse with impunity, or even to set foot upon, the quaking bogs of Celtic archæology. We own that we gazed with no small trembling as we found Mr. Arnold, who knows no literary fear any more than his French friends know physical fear, venturing boldly upon this dangerous surface; and we cannot but admire the great skill with which he has as yet managed to plant his foot upon firm ground, or extricate himself from the quagmire before sinking more than knee-deep at most. We would fain lend him such assistance as lies in our power, by placarding the unsafe portions of his course, and writing "dangerous" in very large letters over Gomer and the Cimmerians, over the attribution of antiquity to any Celtic language as we have it, and over everything connected with the Scotch Highlanders, whom he has fortunately left alone for the present.

If Mr. Arnold means seriously to insist upon his classification of writers upon Celtic literature and antiquities, wherein he divides them into Celt-lovers and Celt-haters, and to uphold it as an exact or exhaustive one, or as one which is at all justifiable in the present day, we must beg him to change his mind forthwith, and shall do our best to convert him as fast as we can. It is not a just one now, and it was not a just one in the days of Edward Lhuyd at the beginning of the last century. It is only just when applied to the intervening period when chaotic nonsense reigned supreme, when the Celtomaniacs had it all their own way in Wales and Ireland, their absurdities being incorporated into the national self-love, and when these extravagant pretensions called into existence the reactionary extravagances of Pinkerton and his school. This state of things is all past and gone now, or, if it lingers at all, it abides with the body of the people as a matter of vulgar prejudice, not with their leaders as a matter of enlightened belief. It is only found among Welsh and Irish Philistines on one hand, among Gothic Philistines on the other hand, and we would fain warn Mr. Arnold of the danger of falling among these. The dawn of the neutral and scientific spirit, first manifested in Dr. Prichard's excellent little book, became as the meridian light of full noon after the publication of Zeuss's immortal *Grammatica Celtica*. The great German, dying, founded a school of Celtic philology which is one of the most conspicuous and flourishing branches of the new and irreversible science for which the world is indebted to Professor Francis Bopp. This school works upon language alone as its subject-matter; but it has been able thus to construct a firm basis of general scientific investigation upon all other points. Celtic archæology is now only trustworthy when in harmony with the teaching of the Zeussian school. If their doctrines are not accepted in England, it is not for want of any inculcation of them, for they have been presented over and over again to the public, notably so in certain articles which are to be found in the earlier numbers of the *Saturday Review*. Upon the anonymous authorship of these we care not to intrude,

further than to advert to the fact of our having recently cited their writer under his own name, as being emphatically a man of genius, and the ablest philologist of the new school who is native to these isles. The real name of "*Mac dá Cherda*," the gifted "Son of two Arts," is better known in Germany than in England, and we take shame for this. These topics in England are left to grow wild and to run adrift; nor do we admit them into the canon of science until they have undergone what is called public discussion, or have been sanctioned by those who have got the right of affirming and denying things, and who act as our bell-wethers. On the Continent it is the common consent of an authoritative and competent body which admits truth at sight in such points, and which then proceeds to work on further by means of the principles thus obtained. Here, when such a theory is started for the first time, all persons, *docti indoctique*, have a voice in discussing it, without any ascertained principles of discussion; it has to be read a second time, and the Ethnological Society has to go into committee about it, and it has to be read a third time, and then it is sent to our recognised hereditary legislators in philology, such as Mr. Crawfurd and Mr. Farrar, and the new cuneiform man who made an exhibition of himself in the *Fraser* of last November, and then it has to be sent up to the Sir Cornewall Lewis of the period to receive his royal assent, before it can pass among us as law. This is well in politics and Reform Bills; but it is anything but well for questions such as that whether Welsh is in the category of Basque or in the category of modern French to pass through the hands of unqualified vestrymen and jurymen, with nothing but common sense and the coarser Minerva to help them. Yet thus it comes to pass that in England there are real living men who doubt the mutual affinity of the Indo-European languages, who know nothing of the details of their comparative grammar, and who listen to Mr. Crawfurd quite as seriously as to that Professor Bopp whom the universal academic world of the Continent at this moment is uniting to honour. But the Irish Academicians have identified themselves actively with the new

learning; and the leading Welsh scholars, such men as Mr. Basil Jones, or Mr. Longueville Jones, or Mr. Williams of Rhydycroesau, fully adopt its principles, and would be ashamed to repeat any of the weary and ridiculous outbursts of national self-love in which their forefathers gloried. Mr. Nash, an Englishman, who has honestly studied the subject from the beginning, and who has received unqualified praise from the Celtic Saturday Reviewer alluded to above, has, we think, been most unfairly classified by Mr. Arnold among Celt-haters. Mr. Nash undertook to expose, and succeeded in exposing, the "dishonesty and blundering," the "scandalous suppressions, mistranslations, and forgeries," with which the old school of writings on Welsh literature teemed, which alienated Englishman from the study of that literature, and which misled even such men as Sir F. Palgrave and Bunsen. This is not hatred of Celts; it is destroying the tares planted by Celts in the field of science, and Mr. Arnold is hardly right or just in attributing to Mr. Nash, a conscientious and valuable workman of the new school, a preconceived anti-Celtic animosity. The words in inverted commas are not ours, they are the words of the Celt who is the first authority on the subject. The classification should stand, not as Celt-lovers and Celt-haters, but as science-lovers and party-lovers—those who are urged by the partisan's Philistine spirit, and those whose path is lighted up by the scientific spirit. We must do Mr. Arnold the justice to say that he hesitates before committing himself. Mr. Nash does not hate the Welsh; he chastises them. His position towards them is, in fact, precisely Mr. Finlay's position towards the modern Greeks.

One word more. There is a touch here and there in Mr. Arnold's delightful picture of the chattering French maid, moving among her Celtic cousins, who speak her own ancestral language about her unconscious ears, which affects us with a pang of dreadful misgiving. How comes the French maid to be a daughter of Gomer, and how come the Welshmen or Cymry to be his sons? What was "the common dwelling-place in the heart of Asia"? Who were the Cimmerians of the Euxine who "came in on their

Western kinsmen"? and by what kinship are they kinsmen? When the Welshman calls white and red and rock and field and church and lord, *gwyn* and *goch* (lege *coch*) and *craig* and *maes* and *llan* and *arglwydd*, in the genuine tongue of his ancestors, how old does Mr. Arnold suppose that tongue to be? This last point had better be settled at once. Till thirty years ago it was usual to attribute a mysterious and unfathomable antiquity to the two Celtic main languages. Their history was uninvestigated; nobody knew or thought of asking whether or not they had any recorded stages of development; on their surface they were utterly unlike anything else in the world; and this halo of age and mystery pleased their speakers and compensated them for the loss of political power. But the result of recent inquiry, which has admitted them into the fullest and most equal right of brotherhood in the great Aryan confraternity of speech, has, in so doing, broken down the charmed circle and dissipated the obscuring and magnifying halo. These languages are no granitic or protozoic formation of the elder world; they are, broadly speaking, the mere detritus of an older speech, just as French or English is a detritus. It redounds to the credit of the leading Welsh and Irish scholars that they can look at this honestly in the face without blinking, accept it as a definite principle, and embody it in their teaching. These words, old as they may be for a modern language, as these go, are not in their old form; they are phonetically corrupt; they have lost their case-endings; and two of them are simply Latin of the later Empire. *Llan* is *plana*, an enclosed level ground; *coch* is *coccinus*, red, in modern Greek κόκκινος. Strangely enough, the later Latin words for yellow and red, *melinus* and *coccinus*, survive nowhere —the Greek excepted—but in Welsh, and in that queer little tongue, the Rumonsch of the Grisons, where they appear as *mellen* and *cotschen*. The first work of the Zeussian school was to restore conjecturally, by means of comparison of all existing or recorded forms found in the Celtic languages, the older speech from which they were held to have been derived. Now it cannot be too often repeated that these conjectural forms, restored with such

wonderful acuteness, have since been literally verified by their actual discovery in inscriptions written in the old Gaulish language which have recently come to light. These are inadequate as regards the verb, but are simply identical as regards the noun. Next to the resurrection of the ancient language of Persia, this is surely the greatest triumph of comparative philology yet achieved. The old Proto-Celtic language may be defined, in a word, as having Welsh or Irish roots—the primitive difference being but small—inflected with terminations after the Latin fashion, all but identical with the Latin ones themselves. The word Cymry has nothing whatever to do with Cimmerians, nor with Cimbri. It is later than the Romans; it was once written with two *m*'s, and its oldest form was demonstrably Combroges, meaning a united or confederate people, as opposed to Allobroges, or alien people. All this, since Zeuss's proof, has been accepted without a dissentient word, except where dissent signifies nothing. As for Gomer, he belongs to Dr. Cumming by vested right, and Mr. Arnold had better leave him to the patentee. We conclude by hoping that Mr. Arnold will not be long in perceiving that the one man who has done more irretrievable harm to the proper appreciation of the imaginative literature of the Gael than ten thousand Pinkertons is James Macpherson, the fabricator of one of the greatest delusions upon earth, and the incarnation of literary injustice to Ireland.

TWO ARTICLES BY LORD STRANGFORD

II.—CELTIC AT OXFORD

September 22, 1866.

Most of our contemporaries who have been prevented by want of space or inclination from giving an account of the late Eisteddfod at Chester with any fulness of detail have concurred in selecting Mr. Matthew Arnold's letter, recommending the institution of a Celtic Professorship at Oxford, as the most important or prominent feature of the proceedings. This concurrence of opinion, fixing upon the one circumstance which served to connect the Welsh festival in a practical way with a project of supposed general interest beyond the limits of the Principality, is certainly a noteworthy fact. The Eisteddfod council appear to have adopted Mr. Arnold's recommendation warmly and promptly, and embodied it at once in a formal resolution. Under these circumstances it may not be superfluous to inquire what it is that Mr. Arnold really wants, how far his object be definite or attainable, and how far, supposing the University to decide upon the establishment of such a professorship, it can find in any part of the world a source of supply equal to a demand for a single individual likely to meet Mr. Arnold's idea. Let us firstly premise that the word "Celtic" itself is entirely a bookman's word. No Celtic or other population now calls itself, or its neighbours, or anybody else, Celtic. The word is entirely a conventional word, transferred from the historical Celtæ of Julius Cæsar's time to a group of modern fragmentary peoples who are their kindred no doubt, but are so by presumption alone. The word in its modern acceptation is bookwork, not vernacular record. Its constant use as a convenient ethnological generalization is apt to lead modern writers into laying undue stress upon the continuance of their common character of identity unimpaired, and far into the historical period, without a shadow of evidence being adduced in justifica-

tion of such a course. It is in the domain of philology, and of philology alone, that their modern divergent species can be raised into the common term of a single ancient one. By philological investigation we are able successfully to get rid of all the old ideas of primæval separation between the two main branches of the Celtic race, of Gaelic waves and Cymric waves and the like,—ideas which seem still as rife as ever outside the Zeussian school. But there is no other way of reducing these two languages under a common term than by philological treatment. The recorded literature of each branch developed itself altogether separately from the other; those who formerly cultivated and who still cultivate the literature of each country, whether for antiquarian purposes, as in Ireland, or for both vernacular and antiquarian purposes, as in Wales, are wholly and altogether out of mutual communion and intercourse with their respective congeners. No Gael knows anything whatever about Welsh literature. No Welshman knows anything whatever about Irish literature. Such an exception as that of the venerable Mr. W. Skene only proves the rule. Mr. Arnold sees in the translated literature of each branch, in so far as it has come before him in an appreciable form, the common property of a delicacy and spirituality which he would contrast with certain qualities alleged to denote both the English and the strictly Teutonic literature. But who is to illustrate this view and work it out in detail by means of a common exposition of, say, the Black Book of Carmarthen and the Yellow Book of Lecan? It is Mr. Arnold who generalises and combines, not the Celtic scholar himself; and the impracticability of finding a suitable professor would be at once perceived the moment an attempt were made to look into details. Even within the Britannic branch we are told by the high authority of one of the ablest writers in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, a most excellent periodical, that not half-a-dozen Welshmen have ever bestowed a thought upon the Cornish remains, or know anything about them. Within the Gaelic branch the Scotch Highlanders are doing all they possibly can to set themselves up as co-ordinates of

their Irish progenitors, and in so doing are only cutting themselves adrift from the safe moorings of modern philology, as well as from the best records of their own antiquities. The convergent tendency of archæological and literary treatment is only now setting in among the Celts, and until a generation be past, and a special class of men be formed, who may be termed by the old Scotian phrase of *Fir dá leithe*, "men of two halves"—*i.e.*, of Ireland and its colony in North Britain—men capable of doing equal justice both to Welsh and Irish literature, we think that the only alternative lies between appointing a professor whose work would be solely philological, with Zeuss for his text-book, or having two professors, one for each language. If this last plan were adopted, we may foretell that, according to the best diagnosis of the rules of patronage and promotion in England, the selection would probably fall on the eldest, most influential, or most pushing Jones on the books of Jesus and on John Brown the gillie. Professor Kingsley is pre-engaged.

APPENDIX B

TWO PASSAGES FROM D. W. NASH'S "TALIESIN"

I.—THE WELSH BARDS AND DRUIDS

THE cloud of fable which has settled on the early history of Britain is with difficulty to be penetrated. Her earliest monuments, rude and unsculptured, afford little assistance to the historian; and her most ancient written documents are composed in a language, sealed to the majority of inquirers. Unfortunately, also, many of those most competent, from a native acquaintance with the still existing dialect of the ancient language of Britain, to undertake the investigation, have suffered themselves to be led into relating, as history, the most extravagant fables, and asserting the most unreasonable claims to antiquity.

The romance of Geoffrey of Monmouth, with its line of Trojan-British kings, and the fables of the Welsh Triads, with Hu Gadarn or the Mighty, "who first conducted the nation of the Cymry from Deffrobani, that is, the place where Constantinople now stands," to the Isle of Britain, and Dyfnwal Moelmud, a legislator who lived 400 years before the Christian era, have each in turn been represented as containing genuine historical materials for the history of Ancient Britain.

The opinions generally maintained by the Welsh writers and historians on the subject of the origin of the Cymry, may be summed up in the words of a learned and judicious writer on Welsh literature, Mr. Stephens,[1] "that the modern Welsh, or Cymry, are the last remnant of the 'Kimmeroi' of Homer, and of the Kymri (Cimbri) of Germany, that great people whose arms struck terror into the Roman legions, and whose virtues Tacitus held up for the imitation of his countrymen. From the Cimbric-Chersonesus (Jutland) a portion of these landed on the

[1] *Literature of the Cymry;* a Critical Essay on the Language and Literature of Wales during the twelfth and two succeeding centuries: to which was awarded the prize given by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod in 1848.

shores of Northumberland, gave their name to the county of *Cumberland*, and in process of time, followed the seaside to their present resting-place, where they still call themselves Cymry, and give their country a similar name. Their history, *clear, concise, and authentic*, ascends to a high antiquity; their language was embodied in verse, long before the languages now spoken rose into notice; and their literature, cultivated and abundant, lays claim to being the most ancient in modern Europe."

Without attempting to discuss the merely conjectural part of this statement, the derivation of the modern Cymry or Welsh from the Cimbri or Kimmeroi, or inquiring whether these latter were a Teutonic or Celtic people, or how it happened that they were not known by the name of Cymry to the Roman writers on the affairs of Britain, we may pass to the interesting and important inquiry, the claims of the Welsh to the possession of a cultivated and abundant literature, the most ancient in modern Europe, and to a clear, concise, and authentic history of great antiquity: a history which should of course include the important transactions of the Cymric nation, their rise and fall in Britain—their wars and struggles, with their native, Roman, and Saxon enemies.

If, in order to reduce the difficulty of this inquiry, we abandon any attempt to tread the labyrinth of an antiquity prior to the establishment of the Roman power in this island, and confine ourselves to the more recent period of the two centuries which succeeded the final departure of the Romans from Britain, we find that even this era, though a period full of events of the greatest interest and importance, most deeply and intimately affecting the fortunes of the British nation, is involved in the greatest doubt and obscurity.

This period, from the commencement of the fifth to the close of the sixth century, presents, as it were, a debateable ground between history and romance. It comprises the almost unknown history of the struggles of the wealthy and civilised Roman and Romano-British inhabitants of the great cities and fortified towns of Britain, against the ceaseless inroads of the native tribes, relieved from the

pressure of the Roman power, and alike allured by the wealth and attracted by the comparative weakness of the citizens; and the history, little more authentic, of the transactions which resulted in the establishment of the Saxon dominion.

It comprises the drama of Vortigern and Rowena; the story of the fatal advent of Hengist and Horsa in their three ships with their band of Saxon sea-rovers; of the treacherous massacre of Stonehenge; and of all the long series of obstinate combats between the Christian tribes of Britain and their Pagan invaders. Moreover, it includes the wonderful romance of the renowned Arthur, "begirt with British and Armoric knights," whose era, commencing with the reign of Aurelius Ambrosius, in the early days of the Saxon invasion, closes with the fatal battle of Camlan, and the destruction of the flower of British chivalry, in A.D. 542.

How much of what passes for history in the relation of the important events which mark this era, deserves that title, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine; for the documentary evidence adduced in its support affords but little aid in unravelling the tangled web of tradition and fable of which it is composed. "Our knowledge of the affairs of Britain, previous to the introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons" (that is, the commencement of the seventh century), says Sir Francis Palgrave,[1] "is derived from the most obscure and unsatisfactory evidence. The early Cymric chronicles scarcely even furnish us with the means of computing time. 'Annus,' 'annus,' 'annus,' is repeated in succession, but no era is marked. The entire absence of dates baffles all attempts which may be made to regulate their chronology, or to knit their fragments into a consistent story. The Welsh, in the days of Giraldus, easily accounted for the loss of all memorials of King Arthur, by asserting that Gildas cast his 'authentic history' of this renowned prince and his nation into the sea; but the same misfortune appears to have fallen on all the British annals of the next three centuries. British history, during

[1] *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, pp. 389-483.

this period, is therefore a mere hypothesis; and in this truly Cimmerian darkness, we can neither admit nor deny the assertion, that all the Cymric principalities, from Alcluyd to the mouth of the Severn, were united under the dominion of Einion Urdd, son of Cunedda; nor are we possessed of the data which could enable us to trace the advance of the Saxon power towards the Severn."

It is again admitted by one of the most competent and learned writers on early Welsh history,[1] that the interval between the termination of the Roman dominion in Britain, and the close of the seventh century, is a historical blank; "for it must be confessed that the Welsh, though possessed of a variety of records relating to that time, have not preserved a regular and connected history of their ancestors, who rose into power upon the departure of the Romans, and who, notwithstanding their dissensions, maintained a longer and more arduous struggle against the Saxons, than the continental parts of the empire did upon the irruption of the Goths and Vandals. In the middle ages, these records, to which was added a large store of tradition, attracted the attention of the romance writers, who gradually invested them with a cloud of fable, which at last, when arranged and regularly digested, was suffered to usurp the place of history. When the *Armorican Chronicle*, usually attributed to Geoffrey of Monmouth, was brought from Brittany to Wales by Walter de Mapes in the twelfth century, its contents were found to be so flattering to national vanity that it was soon received as an authentic record of facts, to the disadvantage of other records of a less pretending nature. For a long time, implicit faith was given to the story of the Trojan-British kings, and the superhuman actions of Arthur and his valorous knights commanded the admiration of Europe, few caring to question the truth of tales which suited the taste of the age, and filled their readers with delight. The criticism of later years has, however, determined the race of Trojan-British kings to be a pure fabrication, and most writers are contented to commence the history of Britain with the invasion of

[1] Rees, *Essay on the Welsh Saints*, 1836. Preface, p. vii.

Julius Cæsar, following the Latin authorities until the termination of the Roman power in the island, when, for want of more satisfactory information, they are obliged to have recourse to records which they know not when to trust, or, leaving the affairs of the Britons in that darkness which they could not dispel, they have confined their researches to the Saxons."

Notwithstanding this acknowledged deficiency in the true sources of history, it is still maintained by the very latest writers on this topic, that there are extant in the Welsh language, compositions as early in date as the sixth century at the least, in which are preserved the traditions if not the history of the Britons, for this obscure period of the fifth and sixth centuries.

"It may be asked," says the Rev. Archdeacon Williams,[1] "how has it come to pass, if great events marked the epoch between the departure of the Romans and the death of Bede, that the whole history is so obscure, and that no literary documents remain to prove the wisdom of the teachers and the docility of the people? The answer is very plain. Such documents do exist: they have been published for more than half a century, but have hitherto wanted an adequate interpreter."

It has been, moreover, strenuously and repeatedly asserted, that these literary remains of the earliest British writers contain the most distinct and conclusive evidence of the persistence, down to at least the close of the sixth century, of the doctrines and mysterious lore of the ancient Druidical priesthood, such as it is represented to have existed in Gaul and Britain, by Cæsar, Pliny, and other Roman authors. It is said by the author above quoted, that in the remains of the early British Bards "we have ample proof that during the Arthurian period (that is, in the fifth and sixth centuries), and probably long before, certainly long after it, there flourished two schools of literature: the one essentially heathenish in creed, although often nominally Christian, and blending with Druidical doctrines, the worship of many of the

[1] *Gomer: a Brief Analysis of the Language and Knowledge of the Ancient Cymry.* London, 1854.

Pagan idols of Greece and Rome, and of their own peculiar mythology. Specimens of this school are to be found in the remains ascribed to Taliesin, the Caledonian Myrddin, and in certain tales of the Mabinogion, as well as other anonymous works." The opinion that the poems of the celebrated Taliesin and other bards of his era, contain Druidical doctrines and Pagan superstitions of some unknown antiquity, is by no means an uncommon one. It is shared by almost all writers on the early periods of British history. Even Sir Francis Palgrave has been misled by the generally received opinion, to which the difficulty of consulting the original documents, and the audacious misinterpretation of portions of them in support of particular theories, have given a fictitious value. "Taliesin," he observes,[1] "hardly conceals his belief in the religion of his forefathers; and the Druidical worship, which was still recollected in Strathclyde and Cumbria, was so strong and vigorous on the opposite shores of Deira, that the British inhabitants not only preserved their priesthood, but had induced the Anglo-Saxon conquerors to embrace their faith; for the name of Coifi the Pontiff (in Gaelic, Coivi, Cuimhe, or Coibidh), by whose persuasion Edwin embraced Christianity in A.D. 627, is no other than the title of the chief of the Druids."[2]

The principal source of these opinions is the Rev. Edward Davies, who, in his two monuments of misapplied learning, his *Celtic Researches*, and the *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, maintained most perseveringly, and certainly not without great erudition, the Druidical character of the works of the British or, rather, Welsh Bards. "Ancient and authentic documents," he says (with reference to these poems), "of the opinions and customs of the old Britons, have been preserved, though long concealed by the shades of a difficult and obscure language." "The mystic lore of the Druids, and those songs

[1] *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, p. 154.

[2] This is a very large conclusion from very slight premises. It is quite clear from the legend that the idol destroyed by the high priest was a Saxon idol, Thor or Woden, and that Coifi himself was a priest of the religion of Odin, who had adopted Christian ideas, and assisted in the conversion of his countrymen.

which are full of their old mythology, were extant and in repute during the ages immediately subsequent to the times of Aneurin, Taliesin, and Merddhin," and that "the ancient superstition of Druidism, or at least some part of it, was considered as having been preserved in Wales without interruption, and cherished by the Bards to the very last period of the Welsh princes; that these princes were so far from discouraging this superstition, that on the contrary they honoured its professors with their public patronage."

In fact, according to the statements of this author, this Druidical superstition, which was actually publicly proclaimed and patronised in Wales down to the time of Edward I. in the thirteenth century, was a Helio-Arkite worship, in which the bull, the horse, and the element of fire, were prominent emblems, and King Arthur the representative of Noah; while a certain Hu Gadarn, whose history is to be found in the Welsh Historical Triads, was also an impersonation of the Patriarch, deified and worshipped by Welshmen in the thirteenth century of the Christian era. Such astounding assertions naturally induce an inquiry for the proof of their credibility. This proof Mr. Davies is not slow to offer. "If this be genuine British heathenism" (*i.e.*, the Helio-Arkite worship and the history of Hu Gadarn), "it will be expected that vestiges of it should be discovered in the oldest Bards which are now extant; and here, in fact," says Mr. Davies, "they present themselves in horrid profusion."

It might be supposed that these views of the Rev. Edward Davies, published as long ago as 1809, had passed, under the influence of increased sources of knowledge, into oblivion; so far from this being the case, we find in a paper, published in the *Transactions of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in* 1847, a learned philologer, Dr. Meyer, citing the Welsh Triads for the elucidation of British ethnology, and giving a metrical German and a prose English translation of a poem ascribed to Taliesin, as "one of the most ancient monuments of Welsh literature, a sacrificial hymn addressed to the god Pryd, in his character as god of the Sun."[1]

[1] This writer also informs us that the names Ossian and Taliesin

The same views are enunciated in works of even later date. Mr. Herbert, in his *Cyclops Christianus*, in 1842, the author of the *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*, in 1852,[1] and the Ven. Archdeacon Williams in *Gomer*, in 1854, present the same account of an ancient philosophy and mythology, to be discovered in the writings of Welsh Bards, supposed to be of the date of the sixth century, and especially in those of the celebrated Taliesin.

The ancient Druid is, in fact, the most prominent figure in British archæology. Clothed in his robe of white, "the emblem of holiness, and peculiarly of truth,"[2] with his golden sickle in his hand, he claims dominion over cairn and barrow, stone-circle, cromlech and monolith, yielding an occasional but reluctant place to his almost as mysterious rival the Dane. Poet and philosopher, priest and prophet, legislator and judge, his functions are as numerous as the religion he professed and the authority which he exercised are doubtful and indefinable.

The true social position of the Druid, and the nature of the religious ceremonies in which he officiated as minister, are, even as to Gaul, involved in great obscurity, notwithstanding the information afforded with regard to them by the classical writers. As regards the British Druids, on the other hand, if we accept the statements of numerous modern writers on British antiquity, their social polity, their religious system, and their rites and ceremonies, are as familiarly known as the objects and transactions of any society for the propagation of learning in modern days.

"We have no reason to believe," says the Archdeacon of Cardigan, "that the heathen Druids of Gaul and Britain were, when historically known, practically less corrupt

are mere mythological concentrations, and personifications of the poetical activity and influence of the interesting Siberian tribe U-sin, one of the principal tribes of the White Tartars, who are identical with the Irish, Ossian being the representative of the bards who themselves belonged to that tribe; Taliesin representing the bards of a neighbouring nation, who received from the Ua-sin the impulse of their art and inspiration.

[1] In the articles, Ceridwen, Amaethon, etc.

[2] Owen, *Essay on Bardism.*

than their brethren in other nations.[1] They however, when struck down and bitterly persecuted by the Roman authorities, found a refuge in Ireland and Scotland for their persons, practices, and doctrines. Hence, when the Britons, after the confusion which immediately followed the overthrow of the Roman power in the island, had gained the ascendance, they resumed the laws, language, and traditions of their ancestors, with the important exception, that they combined with their inherited Christianity the philosophic doctrines of the Druids, which, when stripped of corruptions, represented the primitive religion of the oriental patriarchs. The chief site of the newly established religion seems to have been Gwent and Morganwg, whence it spread with comparative rap dity over all the countries then held by a Celtic population, and also over no small portion of continental Europe."

The same author professes to have given in an appendix to the same work, a body of evidence from external sources which satisfy him, that long before the commencement of written history, there flourished in this island a civilised community, such as it is described by ancient writers. He adds, "nor have I any hesitation in saying, that the language of that community was the Cymraeg, and that a great portion of the lands now held by the church were once in the possession of the priests and philosophers of that community."

This body of evidence may be shortly stated, thus: Diodorus Siculus, about the commencement of the Christian era, quotes from Hecatæus the Milesian, who lived about 500 B.C., a statement of the latter concerning the Hyperboreans. The Hyperboreans lived in an island in the ocean over against Celtica, not smaller than Sicily; a fertile land producing two crops in the year. There Latona was born, and on that account Apollo is honoured by them above all other gods.

Among the Hyperboreans were men, priests as it were of Apollo, constantly hymning lyric songs in his praise. Also in that island was a consecrated precinct of great

[1] Those brethren being, according to the author, the magi of Media, the Chaldeans of Assyria, and the Brahmins of India.

magnificence; a temple of corresponding beauty, in shape spherical, adorned with numerous dedicated gifts; also a city sacred to the god, the majority of its inhabitants harpers, who continually harping in the temple, sang lyrically hymns to the god, greatly magnifying his deeds. The Hyperboreans had a peculiar dialect, and were very friendly disposed to the Hellenes, especially the Athenians and Delians. The moon was not far distant from this island, and clearly showed certain earthly eminences.

Every nineteenth year the god descends into this island. This was the great year of the Hellenes; when the god makes his periodical visit, he both plays the harp and dances during the night, from the vernal equinox to the rising of the Pleiades, taking great delight in his own successful efforts. A family called Boreadæ, descendants of Boreas, were the kings of this city, and superintendents of the temple, succeeding each other by birthright.

"If," says the Archdeacon, "Hecatæus derived his information on this important subject from the Phocœan merchants who frequented the court of King Arganthonius (in southern Spain), it is evident that these Hyperboreans were the occupants of Great Britain, which is so accurately described in the above passage, that even one of the earliest editors of Diodorus could not refrain in his index from writing—'See whether this cannot be applied to Anglica!'"

Pindar, a contemporary, or nearly so, of Hecatæus, also mentions the Hyperboreans. Amongst other things, he informs us that Perseus visited them, and, having entered their hall, found them sacrificing renowned Hecatombs of Asses, wherein Apollo took incessant and most intense delight, laughing while he viewed the petulance of the restive brutes.

Various other early Greek authors mention the Hyperboreans and their Temple of Apollo. Everything would have been perfectly clear, had not Herodotus, "who was a victim to crotchets," stepped in and produced confusion, by his "wilful incredulity." He travelled far, and made every inquiry, but could hear nothing satisfactory of the Hyperboreans, as a real people, and comes to the con-

clusion, that they were something like the one-eyed men of the Scythians—a myth.

The pretensions of the British Druids are fairly stated, in a treatise on the Religion of Ancient Britain,[1] in terms which place them, at the least, on a level with the philosophers of Athens or Alexandria in point of science, and with the most favoured of the Biblical Patriarchs in point of religious doctrine.

It is asserted by this writer, who may be considered as giving an epitome of the generally received statements on this subject, that there existed in this island of Britain, before and at the time of its invasion by Julius Cæsar, a class or caste of persons, who, under the name of Druids, formed a powerful hierarchy; were the depositary of great and extensive learning, and the possessors of civil power; acquainted with letters, arts, and sciences; conversant in the most sublime speculations of geometry, in measuring the magnitude of the earth, and even of the world; philosophers of a sublime and penetrating spirit, adding the study of moral philosophy to that of physiology; skilled in mechanics, and acquainted with rhetoric and other polite arts. The people of whom this remarkable class of gifted men were the priests, the judges, and the instructors, were, by no means, observes the same authority, a nation of wild barbarians, or "painted savages;" but a people, "maintaining regular commercial relations with the most powerful and most polished nations of the world, who were, when they first colonised the island of Britain, possessed of considerable general information brought by them from Asia soon after the dispersion of mankind at the building of the Tower of Babel, and had not, at the time of Cæsar's arrival, greatly degenerated from their original condition."

"Druidism," says another modern writer,[2] "is the term usually employed to designate the primitive religion of our ancestors; a religion which obtained and flourished

[1] *Religion of Ancient Britain historically considered.* London, 1846.

[2] Yeowell's *Chronicles of the Ancient British Church.* London, 1847.

in Britain, from the time it was first colonised, down to the period of its first subjugation by the Romans, fifty-four years before the advent of Christ."

"The following epitome of the religious principles of the primitive Druids of Britain, drawn from their own memorials,[1] will show their conformity to the religion of Noah and the antediluvians; that the patriarchal religion was actually preserved in Britain under the name of Druidism; and that the British Druids, while they worshipped in groves, and under the oak like Abraham, did really adore the God of Abraham, and trust in his mercy.

"1. They believed in one Supreme Being.[2]

"2. In the doctrine of Divine Providence, or that God is the Governor of the universe.

"3. In man's moral responsibility, and considered his state in this world as a state of discipline and probation.

"4. They had a most correct view of moral good and evil.

"5. They offered sacrifices in their religious worship.[3]

"6. They believed in the immortality of the soul and a state of recompense after death.

"7. They believed in a final or coming judgment.

"8. They believed in the transmigration of the soul.[4]

"9. They observed particular days and seasons for religious purposes.

"10. Marriage was held sacred among them.

"This sketch is sufficient to show the identity between the religion of Noah and the antediluvians, and that of the Druids in Britain. So exact an identity of thinking and acting, by two people so far remote from each other, in the same epoch of time, cannot be satisfactorily explained, but on the supposition of the latter people having been connected with the former, and deriving their origin and their institutions from them.

[1] The author has unfortunately omitted to point out where these memorials are to be found. He probably means the Triads; if so, it is something like citing Virgil to prove the costume of Dido.

[2] Cæsar says, that the Druids of Gaul worshipped chiefly Mercury; also Apollo, Mars, and Minerva.

[3] According to Cæsar, human sacrifices.

[4] Was this a patriarchal doctrine?

"The endowment of this Druidic church, or the immunities to which the Druids as ministers of religion and teachers of the learned arts had been entitled, were, five free acres of land; exemption from personal service in war; permission to pass unmolested from one district to another in time of war as well as of peace; support and maintenance wherever they went; exemption from land-tax; and a contribution from every plough in the district in which they were authorised teachers. These ancient privileges enjoyed by the Druids were, upon the introduction of Christianity, legally transferred to the Christian priesthood, by King Lucius." [1]

Not only have the religious tenets of the ancient Druids been thus accurately ascertained, but also the particulars of the costume, ceremonial of initiation, discipline, and gradual progress through the degrees of the Druidic order, are detailed with great minuteness by many writers, and have been collected and related as though they were supposed to be true history, as lately as 1853.[2]

"The three orders of this great institution, were," says this author, "Bards, Druids, and Ovates. The Bards were poets. The Druids were priests and judges: august functions, filling to the eye of the stranger the whole field of vision; hence the second order gave a name to the whole three. The Ovates were a mixed class, replenished from the ranks of the people. The cultivators of science and art: these occupied no mean position, though from the nature of their employments they drew to themselves less observation.

[1] The Lucius here mentioned is the celebrated Llenawg ab Coel ab Cyllin, called "Lleufer Mawr," the great light, who, according to the Triads, built the first church at Llandaff, which was the first in the isle of Britain. He held a correspondence with Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, about A.D. 180. The statement of the transference by him of the Druidic privileges to the Christian church, implies the existence in Britain of an endowed Druidic priesthood, in possession of recognised public rights and immunities, more than one hundred years after the proscription of the Druidic priesthood in Gaul, and the destruction of their stronghold in Anglesey by Seutonius Paulinus. This absurd fable is taken from the Welsh Triads.

[2] *Welsh Sketches*, by E. S. Appleyard, A.M. First Series. London, 1853.

"To begin at the lowest step; a Bardic student bore a distinctive title—Awenydd. The indispensable qualifications for a scholar, were noble birth and unimpeachable morals. On matriculation, he bound himself by oath not to reveal the mysteries into which he was about to be initiated. He was, however, seldom initiated into anything of importance, until his understanding, affections, morals, and general character, had undergone severe trials. He was closely observed when he was least aware of it; there was an eye, to him invisible, continually fixed upon him, and from the knowledge thus obtained, an estimate was formed of his principles and abilities." "An Awennydd wore a plaid dress of the Bardic colours, blue, green, and white." "The candidate who had passed the ordeal was not immediately invested with the full privileges of the Bardic order; he became an Inceptor, or Inchoate Bard, under the title Bardd-Caw, and wore for the first time the band of the order. Not till after he had presided at three Gorseddau or assemblies, was he fully qualified to exercise all the functions of the office. A full Bard could proclaim and hold a Gorsedd, admit disciples and Ovyddion, and instruct youth in the principles of religion and morality. The dress of the Bard was uni-coloured, of sky-blue, an emblem of peace and truth."

"The Druids were the second order, but it was necessary to pass through the first to reach it. That is to say, a Druid must have been a Bard, though it was by no means required that a Bard should be a Druid." "The Druids were priests and judges; this union in their persons of the sacerdotal and judicial functions gave them great weight and authority, and caused their office to be in much request."

"The place of meeting of the Druids was called Gwyddfa, which, as the name implies, 'a place of presence,'[1] was an eminence either natural or artificial, according to the conveniency of the situation." "A white robe, emblematic of truth and holiness, and also of the solar light, was the distinguishing dress of the Druids." "The judicial habit of the Arch Druid was splendid and

[1] In Owen's *Dict.*, gwyddfa, a tumulus or tomb.

imposing. He was clothed in a stole of virgin-white, over a closer robe of the same, fastened by a girdle, on which appeared the crystal of augury encased in gold. Round his neck was the breastplate of judgment, said to possess the salutary but uncomfortable property of squeezing the neck on the utterance of a corrupt judgment.[1] Below the breastplate was suspended the Glain Neidr, or serpent's jewel. On his head he had a tiara of gold. On each of two fingers of his right hand he wore a ring; one plain, the other a chain ring of divination. As he stood beside the stone altar, his hand rested on the Elucidator, which consisted of several staves called Coelbrenan, omen sticks, on which the judicial maxims were cut; and which, being put into a frame, were turned at pleasure, so that each stave represented a triplet when formed of three sides.

"The third order was the Ovydd or Ovate, to which the candidate could be immediately admitted without being obliged to pass through the regular discipline. The requisite qualifications were, in general, an acquaintance with discoveries in science, the use of letters, medicine, language, and the like. The Ovydd could exercise all the functions of Bardism; and by some particular performance he became entitled to other degrees on the confirmation of a Gorsedd. The candidate for the order of Ovydd, was elected at a Gorsedd, on the previous recommendation of a graduated Bard of any of the three orders who might from his own knowledge declare that he whom he proposed was duly qualified. If the candidate were not known to a Bard, the recommendation of a judge or magistrate, or twelve respectable men, could constitute him a candidate; on which he was immediately elected by ballot. The dress of the Ovydd was green, the symbol of learning, as being the colour of the clothing of nature; and it was unmixed with any other, to show that it was uniform, like truth."

[1] This statement as to the breastplate of judgment, is taken from the account of the breastplate or collar of the Brehon judges of Ireland, and transferred without comment or authority to imaginary functionaries of the same kind in Britain. See Vallancey, *Collect.*

For these "historical" statements, the author in question cites as his authorities, Meyrick's *Costumes of the Ancient Britons;* Dr. Giles's *History of the Ancient Britons;* Wood's *Ancient British Church;* Owen's *Welsh Dictionary*, and certain Institutional Triads, in which the opinions and "sermons" of these orders are supposed to be preserved.

They are however, in fact, mainly derived from Dr. Owen's *Essay on Bardism*, prefixed to his translation of the poems of Llywarch Hen. That learned Welshman and scholar, appears readily to have credited the fantastic reveries of Edward Williams, otherwise called Iolo Morganwg, and the exaggerations, if not forgeries, with which he pretended to support them.

The *Essay on Bardism*, published in 1792, was drawn up from the communications, and with the assistance of Edward Williams. The latter claimed to be a regularly graduated Bard of the Island of Britain, president of the Bardic chair of Glamorgan, and a legitimate successor to, and representative of, the ancient Druids.

We shall have occasion to inquire into the value of the assertions of Edward Williams when examining the authorities on the subject of the Druidical Metempsychosis.

All the information which can be obtained respecting the learning and condition of the Bards, and the doctrines, whether Christian or Pagan, which they may have inculcated in their writings prior to the tenth century, must, of course, be extracted from such writings, if any, as are extant of an earlier date. Fortunately for the true understanding of this question, the same materials, in the same, or even a better condition, which were at the disposal of Dr. Owen Pughe and the Rev. Edward Davies, are at command at the present day, and to these we must turn for any satisfactory elucidation of the subject.

References to British poems of the sixth century are so frequently made by writers on these subjects, that it will be well to ascertain, in the first place, what we really possess in the shape of Ancient British literature.

The most ancient manuscripts containing fragments of

the Welsh language, according to Zeuss,[1] are as old as the tenth, possibly as old as the ninth century. They are not, it is true, Druidical, or even Bardic, but simply glosses written by British individuals, probably monastic persons, as marginal or interlinear interpretations or references, on manuscripts still in existence.

The oldest of these is the Oxford Codex, preserved in the Bodleian Library, which contains, among other things:—

1. A portion of the Treatise of Eutychius the grammarian, with interlinear British glosses.

2. A portion of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, also with interlinear glosses in the same tongue.

These remains of the old British language are stated by Zeuss[2] to be of equal age with the oldest Irish MSS., and to belong to the end of the eighth or the commencement of the ninth century.

3. In the same Codex are two other documents: an alphabet called the alphabet of Nemnivus,[3] a rude imitation of Runic forms, with the names of the letters attached. Also a fragment of a treatise on Weights and Measures, written partly in British, partly in Latin. These are probably as old, though not as valuable, as the former.

4. The second Oxford Codex, also in the Bodleian Library, contains a vocabulary of Latin words with British interpretations.

5. The Lichfield Codex, Llandaff Gospel, or St. Chad's Book, in which donations to the church of Llandaff are enumerated, contains many words and sentences in the British tongue, describing the boundaries of the estates given to the church, as old as the commencement of the ninth century.

6. Of the same age is a leaf found attached to the cover of a Codex in the Luxembourg Library.

"All these," says Zeuss, "are genuine ancient monu-

[1] *Grammatica Celtica.* Lipsiæ, 1853. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] It is thus prefaced:—"Nemnivus invented these letters on the occasion of a certain Saxon remarking reproachfully that the Britons had no letters; whereupon Nemnivus at once made these up out of his own invention, and so got rid of the reproach cast upon his nation."

ments, preserved in writing, and coeval with the older forms of the Cambric tongue." [1]

The Liber Landavensis, the ancient Chartulary or Register Book of the Cathedral of Landaff, called also the Book of Teilo, which has been published by the Welsh MSS. Society, was, according to Zeuss and the editor of the published work, compiled in the former part of the twelfth century, but from materials of an older date. Charters contained in it relate to grants of lands to the church, professedly by personages of the sixth century.

The laws of Howel Dda, compiled in the tenth century; the oldest MS. is of the date of the twelfth century.

The oldest known manuscript containing the poetical compositions of the Welsh Bards, and the fountain of the supposed Druidic superstitions, is that known by the name of the Llyvr Du o Gaer Vyrdhin, or the Black Book of Caermarthen, in the library of the Vaughans at Hengwrt. It is a quarto of 54 leaves, the first 45 being in a different hand, and apparently older than the rest. The latter portion of the MS. contains an elegy on the death of Madog ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys in the year 1158; and in the former part is an elegy on the death of Howel, in 1104, who was great-grandson of the famous legislator of the tenth century, Howel Dda.[2]

The oldest known MS. containing poetical compositions is therefore of the twelfth century.[3] Its title of *Book of Caermarthen* is supposed to be derived from its having originally belonged to a priory in that town: a very pro-

[1] These glosses have been published by Zeuss in an Appendix to his *Grammatica Celtica*. Several of them had been previously noticed by Edward Lhuyd in his *Archæologia Britannica*, by Wanley, and Archbishop Usher; but it was reserved for a foreigner to publish these most ancient memorials of the British language, and, after Lhuyd, the only critical examination of the Celtic dialects.

[2] Villemarqué, *Poëmes des Bardes Bretons du 6e Siècle*, Introd. p. 8, citing the authority of Aneurin Owen. This elegy is not mentioned in the list of the contents of the Llyvr Du given by Lhuyd in the *Archæologia*.

[3] It is said in the preface to the *Mabinogion*, that there is another MS. in the Hengwrt Library containing the Graal in Welsh, also of the twelfth century; and a MS. of the Gododin, on vellum, is said by Mr. Williams ab Ithel to have been transcribed in the year 1200.

bable account, as many of the early poems have evidently passed through a monastic laboratory.

The contents of the *Black Book of Caermarthen*, when examined by Edward Lhuyd about the close of the seventeenth century, were:—

1. The Dialogue between Myrddin and Taliesin.

2. The Beddau Milwyr Ynys Brydain, or Graves of the Warriors of the Island of Britain.

3. The Predictions of Myrddin from his Grave.

4. The Avallenau.

5. The Hoianau, or Porcellanau.

6. The Song of Yscolan.

7. The Song of the Sons of Llywarch Hen.

8. Songs to Gwyddno Garanhir, to Maelgwn, to Gwyn ab Nudd, Gwendoleu, Gwallawg ab Lleenawg, Bran ab Guerydh, Meirig ab Kynele, Lhoegr ab Lhyenog, and the song "which was made when the sea overflowed the Cantref Gwaelod."

9. The names of the Sons of Llywarch Hen.

10. The Song of Geraint ab Erbin.

11. The Elegy on the Death of Madog ab Meredydd.

12. The Song to the Lord Rhys.

As far, therefore, as the evidence on this subject goes, the greater part of the poems ascribed to Taliesin had not been reduced to writing in the twelfth century. They are found in the *Red Book* of Hergest, from 100 to 150 years later.

We have also an interval of nearly six hundred years between the time at which they are supposed to have been composed, and the earliest MS. in which they are found.

There is, however, one MS. which is said to be as old as the seventh century. This is the fragment described by Edward Lhuyd in the *Archæologia Britannica*, who found it written in, as he says, a Gwyddelian hand, on the first leaf of an old copy of Juvencus. "By the writing, and

by a few more words of the same language, I am certain that the book has come from Scotland, and I can also compute the age of the manuscript. I know not whether it is the language of the Strathclyde Britons, or of the Picts or old Caledonians; it is the oldest and strangest British I have yet seen. I do not understand the aim and meaning of the lines."

The next in point of age and importance, is the Llyfr Coch o Hergest, or Red Book of Hergest, in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. It consists of a folio volume containing 721 pages, written in double columns, upon vellum. "At the end of the Llyfr Coch are some poems bearing the name of Lewis Glyn Cothi, who flourished at the close of the fifteenth century. This circumstance has given rise to the idea that the whole of the MS. (which is said to have been transcribed from one of still more ancient date) is in the handwriting of the Bard himself; but it is more probable, that, like most others of that period, it is from the hand of professed scribes, more particularly, as it bears the appearance of having been written by various persons, and at different times." [1]

According to Edward Lhuyd, it was written about the end of the fourteenth century. The poems of Taliesin and Llywarch Hen, were certainly not transcribed in the Red Book at an earlier period, as the poetry begins at the 513th page, while at the 208th page occurs "A Brief Chronology from Adam to A.D. 1318;" and at the 499th page, "A Chronological History of the Saxons, from their first arrival to A.D. 1376." [2]

According to Taillandier, in his preface to Lepelletier's *Dictionary*, the oldest Breton (Armorican) MS. is of the date of A.D. 1450, being a collection of the predictions of a pretended prophet Gwinglaff, the same apparently as the Merddin of the Welsh.

The Bardic compositions, as they are called, certainly comprising the oldest known remains of Welsh literature, were collected and published in 1301, in a work entitled the *Myvyrian Archæology of Wales*, collected out of

[1] Preface to *Mabinogion*, by Lady Charlotte Guest.
[2] See *Cambro-Briton*, vol. ii. p. 107.

ancient manuscripts, edited by Owen Jones, Edward Williams, and William Owen.

This collection is in three volumes. The first volume containing, in the words of the "General Advertisement," by the editors, "so much of the ancient poetry of the Britons as fate has bequeathed to us, and comprehending all the remaining compositions from the earliest times to the beginning of the fourteenth century."

The second and third volumes are in prose, and contain the Triads, Collections of Proverbs, Genealogies of the Saints, the Chronicles of Tysilio and Gruffyd ab Arthur, and the Laws of Howel Dda.

The Barddoniaeth, or poetry, of the first volume of the *Myvyrian Archæology* is chronologically divided into two series. First, the works of the Cynveirdd, or earliest Bards, from the sixth to the middle of the tenth century, comprising the most celebrated names in the annals of Bardic lore. Secondly, the works of the Gogynveirdd, or later Bards, the Bards of the middle ages, from A.D. 1120 to A.D. 1380.

The Cynveirdd, or Primitive Bards, whose poems have been preserved and are contained in the *Myvyrian Archæology*, are Aneurin, Taliesin, Heinin, Llywarch Hen, Myrddin, Llevoed, Golyddan, Meigant, Elaeth, Tysilio, Cuhelyn, Gwyddno, and Gwydion ab Don, with some anonymous pieces of the earliest bards.

Of the 124 compositions comprised in this series, no less than 77, or nearly two-thirds, are attributed to Taliesin, comprehending historical, mystical, philosophical, religious, moral, and satirical pieces. These are the poems which, in conjunction with those attributed to Merlin, form the great storehouse whence the materials have been drawn, in support of the opinion that the learning and philosophy, the myths, traditions, and superstitions of the ancient Druidic hierarchy of Gaul and Britain, are to be found in compositions, none of which are pretended to be of earlier date than the commencement of the sixth century of the Christian era.

That a very considerable number of the works attributed to Taliesin by the transcribers of the MSS. and in the

Myvyrian Archæology, could not possibly be ascribed to the sixth, or seventh, eighth, or tenth centuries, is evident on a mere inspection of their contents. The name of this celebrated Bard has, however, been a tower of strength to the majority of the Welsh archæologists, who have unhesitatingly accepted all that presented itself under this famous superscription, as evidence of the state of literature and philosophy among their countrymen in the sixth century.

The published compositions of the Welsh Bards form but a very small portion of the extant remains of their works. It appears [1] that the Myvyrian MSS. alone, now deposited in the British Museum, amount to 47 volumes of poetry of various sizes, containing about 4700 pieces of poetry, in 16,000 pages, besides about 2000 englynion or epigrammatic stanzas. There are also in the same collection, 53 volumes of prose, in about 15,300 pages, containing a great many curious documents on various subjects. Besides these, which were purchased of the widow of the celebrated Owen Jones, the editor of the *Myvyrian Archæology*, there are a vast number of collections of Welsh MSS. in London, and in the libraries of the gentry of the Principality. Notwithstanding all that has been written about the Cymry—their antiquity, learning, and the love of their native institutions—none of these have been published either by wealthy individuals, or by the numerous literary societies of Wales. It is to the liberality and public spirit of a furrier in Thames Street, that we are indebted for the means of forming an acquaintance with these early British compositions.

It would seem from Edward Lhuyd's statement in the *Archæologia Britannica*, that the possessors of Welsh MSS. in his day held the same views as "the Earl of Ashburnham, of Asburnham House, near Battle, Sussex," in 1857, who, according to Mr. Beale Poste,[2] is in possession of an inedited manuscript copy of the *History of Nennius*, but "is stated to decline his manuscripts being consulted for literary purposes." But since the publica-

[1] See *Cambro-Briton*, vol. iii. p. 443.
[2] *Britannia Antiqua*, p. 46. London, 1857.

tion of the *Mabinogion* by Lady Charlotte Guest, and the great interest excited by that work, in consequence of its important bearing upon the history of the Romance literature of Europe, it is to be hoped, that if any literary treasures do exist among those MS. collections, they may be made available to the literary world.[1]

[1] We may venture to suggest to the Welsh MSS. Society, that it is not necessary to publish English translations of Welsh MSS., a process which involves a large and unnecessary expenditure of time and money. What is wanted, is to have the documents themselves in print: those who wish or are able to make use of them, can supply the translations where requisite.

TWO PASSAGES FROM D. W. NASH'S "TALIESIN"

II.—THE MYTHOLOGICAL POEMS

We now come to those remains of the Welsh Bards which have been supposed to contain the mythology, superstition, and philosophy of the celebrated Druids.

The views of the Rev. Edward Davies on the subject of these poems are too well known to require recapitulation at any length. He represented the Druidic religion as a Helio-Arkite superstition, in which ceremonies commemorative of the Deluge, and certain mystical rites analogous to those of Bacchus, Ceres, and Isis, played an important part. The doctrines and ceremonies of this religion he supposed to have been preserved in songs and traditions by the inhabitants of Britain through the period of the Roman ascendancy, to have survived the introduction of Christianity into this island, and to have continued in a vital condition down to as late as the twelfth century, and produced from the writings attributed to the Bards of the sixth century abundant evidence, as he affirmed, of the truth of his positions.

In this sense he translated, or rather, mistranslated, a considerable number of the ancient Welsh poems, wresting the plainest and most obvious expressions from their simple meaning, in order to educe the mysteries which had no place save in his own imagination.

Where he met with expressions clearly indicative of Christian doctrine, as addresses to the "Merciful Trinity," "Christ the Son," "the Father," "the day of judgment," etc., which recur at every turn in these poems, he either omitted them altogether, treating them as interpolations, or gave them another and mysterious meaning, or declared them to have been introduced as a cloak, to deceive the uninitiated, and induce the outer world to believe that the Pagan Bard was in fact a good Christian.

The influence which these translations of Mr. Davies have exercised on all investigations into early British history, has been most extensive. His opinion has been widely adopted, and his translations taken as evidences of history. We have before alluded to one remarkable instance of the spread of this delusion, in the so-called translation given by Dr. Meyer of what he styles a hymn to the god Pryd in his character as god of the sun, as follows:—

"Pryd, God of Great Britain, splendid Hu, listen to me! King of Heaven, do not during my office hide thyself from me! A fair repast is spread before thee by the castle between the two lakes (a religious expression for Great Britain); the lakes surround the wall; the wall surrounds the city; the city invokes thee, King Almighty; a pure offering stands before thee, a chosen victim in its sacrificial veil; a great serpent (a common epithet of the sun, referring to its circuitous course) encircles from above the place where the sacred vases stand." [1]

This translation is hardly less absurd than that of Mr. Davies. The first two lines have no connection with the rest, but belong to the preceding piece, the *Marwnad Uther Pendragon*. They are in the same metre with those that precede, and are necessary to complete the sense.

Fy nhafawd i draethu fy Marwnad
Handid o meinad gwrthgloddiad byd
Pryd Prydain hu ysgein ymwhyllad
Gwledig Nef ynghennadeu nam doad,—

My tongue in reciting my elegy,[2]
Though the world should be surrounded with a wall of stone,
Over the surface of Britain would be spreading thy memory.
Lord of Heaven, grant oblivion for sin.

The following is the real poem, which the reader will be surprised to find, so far from being a description of these sacrificial mysteries, and the immolation of a victim in a castle between two lakes, is, in fact, neither more nor less than a Christmas carol, or song in honour of the Nativity of our Saviour:—

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[1] *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.* Oxford, 1847. P. 304.
[2] The Elegy of Uther Pendragon.

ARMES

Kein gyfeddwch
Y am deulwch [1] lluch omplaid
Pleid am gaer
Caer yn chaer ry yscrifiad
Virain fo rhagddaw
Ar llen [2] caw mwyedig Vein
Dreig amgyffreu
Odd uch lleeu llestreu llad
Llad yn eurgyrn
Eurgyrn yn llaw
Llaw yn ysci
Ysci ymodrydaf
Fur itti iolaf
Buddyg Veli
A Manhogan
Rhi rhygeidwei deithi
Ynys fel Feli
Teithiawg oedd iddi

Pump pennaeth dimbi
O wyddyl ffichti
O bechadur cadeithi
O genedl ysgi
Pump eraill dymbi
O Norddmyn mandi
Whechedd ryfeddri
O hen hyd fedi
Seithfed o heni
I weryd tros li
Wythfed lin o Ddyfi
Nyd llwydded escori
Gynt gwaedd Venni
Galwawr Eryri
Anhawdd y deui
Iolwn Eloi
Pan yn bo gan Geli
Addef Nef dimbi.

A FRAGMENT, ENTITLED "A PROPHECY"

A splendid feast
For the reconciliation of contending parties.
Contention in the city,
Hateful violence.
Beautiful was his presence,
In linen swaddling clothes extremely delicate.
The chiefs around
Place on high the gift-vessels,
Gifts of golden goblets.
The goblet in the hand
Full of liquor,
The liquor of the beehive.
I adore thy wisdom.
The victorious Beli,
Son of Manogan
The King, who was the chief guardian
Of the Island of Britain,[3]
Was journeying to thee.

This is the termination of the Christian hymn, for such it is evident that it is. The poet speaks of the gifts brought by the chiefs, the wise men from the East, and says that Beli the son of Manogan, one of the kings of Britain who reigned before the time of Julius Cæsar, was also present. The rest of the piece is of a predictive character, which evidently did not originally belong to the former part. The mention of the chiefs from Normandy is sufficient to show its date.

[1] Dadolwch. [2] Lleng.
[3] Ynys Feli, the Honey Island, said in the Triads to be one of the names of Britain. It has a very suspicious resemblance to Inis-fail, the old name of Ireland.

Five chieftains there shall be
Of the Gwyddel Fichti,
Incorrigible sinners
Of a headlong race.
Five others there shall be
From Normandy,
The sixth a wondrous king
From his birth to his grave.
The seventh of these
From the country beyond the sea
The eighth of the line of Ddyfi,
Not fortunate his enemies.
Before the shout of Menni
Calling upon Eryri (Snowdon),
Not easily shalt thou come.
Let us adore Eloi,
When, in being with Christ,
Our dwelling shall be in heaven.

This astounding fallacy of a hymn to the god Pryd in the Welsh language, being preserved among the works of the Cynveirdd, has been, together with the equally fantastic notion that "Ossian and Taliesin, *i.e.*, Ua-sin and Tal-ua-sin, are mere mythological concentrations and personifications of the poetical activity and influence of the tribe of the Fena," reprinted by M. Bunsen in his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History*,[1] in the "Last Results of the Celtic Researches." Dr. Meyer, however, in preparing his Report for M. Bunsen's work, has omitted the remarkable and amusing statement in that report, as published in 1847, concerning "that interesting Siberian tribe U-sin, one of the principal tribes of the White Tartars, blue-eyed and fair-haired, as they are described by the Chinese chroniclers (who mention them, together with the Yueti, *i.e.* Goths), and the same, as I believe, with the Irish (or Fenish) Ua-sin, *i.e.*, *light fair* tribe, celebrated in Irish legends for its cultivation of the arts alike of war and peace, and for the number of bards as well as heroes it has produced."

But M. Bunsen has embalmed in his work, for European circulation, Dr. Meyer's opinion, that "the Irish poem of *Oigidh Llainne Uisnech* (the death of the sons of Uasin)[2] contains, in a mythological and symbolical form, the story of the final destruction of this interesting Siberian tribe of White Tartars in the northern part of Ireland, in consequence of a long series of combats against the Picti or Cruithne."

We are not at present concerned with the story of Ossian or the Fingalian heroes; but we may remark, that as the

[1] Vol. i. pp. 143-171. London, 1854.
[2] Called *Uisneach* in the original Irish. The poem itself is called *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach*.

sons of Uisneach were slain by Conchobar Mac Nessa, King of Ulster, the tribe of White Tartars must have been revived to fight the battle of Gabhra with Cairbre son of Art, son of Conn of the Hundred Battles, more than two centuries later, according to all Irish tradition and chronology. Such statements as these of Dr. Meyer, published with such apparent authority, are real obstacles to all progress in investigating the true history and relations of the two great branches of the Celtic race. They have not even the merit of novelty to recommend them; for Strahlenberg in 1730, and Bochat in his *Memoires Critiques sur l'Ancienne Suisse*, derive the Kelta from the Siberian Tungusi, the most powerful tribe of the Sabatzi Tungusi being the Keltakæ, that is the Keltai or Celts—an opinion which received the approbation of Vallancey, in his *Irish Grammar*.

THE TEMPLE PRESS LETCHWORTH ENGLAND